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LONDON: HODDER AND STOUGHTON

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

GEORGE MARK ELLIOTT LIBRARY
The Cincinnati Bible Seminary

By R. W. DALE, LL.D
BIRMINGHAM

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PREFACE

THREE or four years after I left college I met in the streets of Birmingham a Congregational Minister, from whom I had heard several very remarkable sermons. There was fancy in them, and humour and pathos and passion, and, at times, great keenness and originality of thought. He was a Welshman, and his preaching had many of the qualities which have given such extraordinary power to the great Non-conformist preachers of Wales. He had reached middle age, and I was still a young man, and he talked to me in a friendly way about my ministry. He said, 'I hear that you are preaching doctrinal sermons to the congregation at Carr's Lane; they will not stand it.' I answered, 'They will have to stand it.'

There was too much of the insolent self-confidence of youth in both the temper and the form of my reply; but the conception of the ministry which it

expressed was, I believe, a just one—as far as it went; and it is a conception which, with more or less fidelity, I have endeavoured to fulfil.

To avoid the danger of failing to give to any of the great doctrines of the Christian Faith an adequate place in my preaching, I have sometimes drawn up, in December or January, a list of some of the subjects on which I resolved to preach during the following twelve months. One of these lists is now lying before me; and, for the sake of those of my younger brethren in the ministry whom it may interest, I venture to insert it. It includes the following topics: —The Incarnation; the Divinity of Christ; the Personality of the Spirit; the Trinity; Sin; the Atonement; Faith; Justification; Life in Christ; Regeneration; Sanctification; Judgment to come. As I was also anxious to avoid the danger of omitting to preach with definiteness and emphasis on great Christian duties I added to the list the following subjects:—Truth; Justice; Magnanimity; Industry; Temperance; Endurance; Public Spirit; Courage; Contentment. Four of these subjects, I notice, are enclosed in brackets, which indicate, I think, that they were inserted in the original list after the year had begun. The dates and other marks attached to the list show that in the course of the year I preached at least once on all but three of

the subjects; that I preached several times on five of them; and that, in addition to the sermons which were wholly, or almost wholly, occupied with the prescribed topics, I treated some of them incidentally with sufficient fulness to justify a record.

But I had never attempted to deliver a series of discourses expounding, in an orderly and systematic manner, all the principal doctrines of the Christian Faith. In the sermons which are collected in this volume I have, at last, made the attempt. They have been delivered during the last twelve months. When I had written them, I found that several of them were so long that they would impose an undue strain on the attention of the congregation, and I therefore, in one or two cases, gave a brief summary of an extended argument, and, in other cases, omitted a whole section. But so far from finding that a congregation will not 'stand' doctrinal sermons, my experience is that such sermons, if of moderate length, are of great interest to large numbers of Christian people.

Except in one of the discourses I have made hardly any conscious and intentional use of old materials. As a man's experience of the difficulties and failures of human life, and of the abounding grace of God, and of the power of the Christian redemption, increases, he comes to see great truths more clearly; their

apparent relative magnitudes are modified; there is a change in the atmosphere through which he sees them; perhaps they are transfigured by the splendours of sunset; and I was anxious that my congregation, which had had my earlier thoughts on these great subjects, should now have my latest. If life and strength are prolonged, and if, in the judgment of friends whom I can trust, the discourses now printed seem likely to be of service to Christian people, I may endeavour, in a second series, to treat some of those doctrines of the Faith which are not treated in this.

R. W. DALE.

TREBORTH,
August 20th, 1894.

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I

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD (I.)

'*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*'—1 COR. ii. 5.

THE Christian Gospel declares that the Eternal God, the Creator of all things, the Lord and Ruler of all, has an infinite love and pity for the human race; and that by acts of transcendent mystery and glory He has redeemed us from sin and eternal death. It declares that this redemption was achieved through Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the Eternal Son of God became flesh. It declares that He died for the sins of the world; that He has risen again, has ascended to glory, and that in Him we are the heirs of eternal perfection and eternal blessedness.

It therefore assumes the existence of God; and it may be thought that the Christian theologian, and even the Christian preacher, in order to make the foundations of Christian faith firm and immovable, ought to begin by giving decisive proofs of God's existence. For until men are certain that *God is*, how is it possible for them to believe either that He loves them or that He has redeemed

them? And if, after they have believed the Christian Gospel, they discover that they have never had any clear and demonstrative proof of the existence of God, will not the whole structure of their religious thought and life be like the house built on the sand, which, when the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew, fell, and great was the fall thereof?

But there are truths which are too necessary to the life of man to need 'proofs.' Take, for example, the truth that we are under an obligation to do right —that we ought to do right whatever it may cost us. That truth is of such immense importance to human life that we are certain of it without proofs. Imagine what the condition of the world would be if every man had to master a system of ethics before he could be sure that he ought to be just and truthful. Indeed, a man must be sure of it before he can find any meaning in the very terms of ethical science; unless a man is already certain that he ought to be just and truthful such words as 'right' and 'wrong,' 'duty' and 'obligation,' are unintelligible to him.

We are *so made* that we cannot live with other men without discovering that there are duties which *we* owe to them, and duties which *they* owe to us; and in this discovery we come into the presence of that august Moral Law which has authority over both them and us. No 'proofs' are necessary to compel us to believe that we ought to obey it. We

are *so made*, I repeat, that we know that we ought to obey.

There is another truth, closely akin to this, which is also of such immense importance to human life that we are certain of it without proofs. We are *so made* that we are constantly approving or censuring the moral conduct of other men; we are constantly approving or censuring our own. But when we praise a man for having done right, or censure him for having done wrong, we assume that he was not compelled to do it, but did it of his own free choice. When we condemn ourselves for doing wrong or regard ourselves with approval and complacency for doing right, it is because we know that we did it freely, that we had a choice and exercised it, that we were not under compulsion. The whole order of human life rests on our knowledge that we and other men are not automata, but that, within limits, both they and we are morally free.

Nothing is more certain to us than our moral freedom and the authority of the Moral Law; but our faith in these truths does not rest on reasoning, on proofs, on arguments which can be set out in a sermon, a lecture, or a book. These truths, as I have said, are too great, they are too important in relation to human life, to rest on foundations which have to be constructed by the human intellect. We are *so made* that we come to know them with a knowledge as immediate and as certain as that with which we know the mountains and the sea.

Nor does our faith in the existence of God rest on arguments that can be set out in a sermon, a lecture, or a book. It is not the final inference in a long chain of reasoning, every link of which must be tested before we can be certain of the conclusion; we are certain of it before we begin to inquire into the grounds of our certainty; if we cannot tell how or why we came to believe it, we believe it still. We may examine demonstration after demonstration of the existence of God and discover a logical fault in every one of them, and yet our faith remains unmoved. The truth that God exists is, in this respect, analogous to the truth that we are morally free, and to the truth that the authority of the Moral Law is absolute; these, as I have already said, are among the truths which are too necessary to the life of man to need 'proofs;' our belief in them may be confirmed by inquiry, but does not rest upon it.[1] If our faith in the existence of God rested on demonstrations constructed by the ingenuity of philosophers or theologians it would 'stand in the wisdom of men' —not 'in the power of God.'

In this discourse, therefore, I do not propose to construct an argument that shall compel the faith of those by whom the existence of God is doubted or denied; to construct such an argument is impossible; if the denial or the doubt is to disappear it will not be under the compulsion of an argument addressed to the intellect, but as the result of a

[1] Note A.

deeper experience of the mystery of the universe and of the life of man. I shall attempt the humbler task of showing *How we come to know that God is.* I do not even propose to inquire, How men *first* came to know that God is; but How *we ourselves* come to know it.[1] This inquiry cannot compel faith; but it may liberate the intellect from speculative difficulties by which faith has been perplexed and enfeebled.

I.

If the question were, How do we come to *believe* that God is? and not How do we come to *know* that God is? the answer—so far as the immense majority of men living in a country like this are concerned—would be very obvious and very simple. A belief in the existence of God is part of that great tradition—enriched, modified, corrected from age to age—which has contributed to form our national character. As we have entered into the possession of immense material wealth which has been created by the labour and the skill of many preceding centuries—millions of acres of land once covered with forests or wasted by floods but now cleared, drained, fenced, and under cultivation; tools and machinery for every art and every industry; roads, canals, harbours, docks; fleets of ships ready to cross the seas and to bring us back the products of every distant shore; stately buildings for public uses,—colleges, schools, museums, libraries,

[1] Note B.

galleries of art; cities and hamlets, where millions of living men eat and drink, and work and sleep in houses built by the hands of the dead; as we have entered into the possession of all these—so we have entered into the possession of those beliefs, of those conceptions of the order of the world and of the laws and aims of the life of man which are the result of the thought and experience, the joys and sorrows, the defeats and the triumphs of all that have gone before us. If every new generation had to begin afresh—if it inherited no working theory of the universe, of human society and of the right conduct of the individual life—civilisation would be impossible. According to the actual order of the world we are not isolated individuals, but members of an immense community. We are partners—not only with all our contemporaries—but with all past generations. The race lives and works and suffers for the individual as well as the individual for the race. The nobler, the richer, and the more varied is the civilisation of any nation, the nobler, the richer, and the more varied is the inheritance — material, intellectual, and moral — of every individual citizen; but even the child of a savage starts in life with the knowledge and resources of his family and his tribe.

In this country and in this age a belief in the existence of God is a national tradition; it is part of that common inheritance which has descended to us from our ancestors.

We did not discover the existence of God for our-

selves. When we were children we were told that He created all things; that He is always near to us, sees all that we do, hears all that we say, knows all that we think; that He loves us, and that all our happiness comes from Him. We were taught to obey Him, to pray to Him, to worship Him. We were warned that God is angry with men for lying, dishonesty, selfishness, cruelty, and every other kind of wrong-doing, and that if they persist in these evil things, He will inflict on them awful punishment. And so the idea of God's authority became incorporated with our sense of the obligations of Duty.

It was not our parents and teachers alone who formed our minds to this belief. As I have said, the belief is a national tradition. Its power is upon us everywhere. Our literature is penetrated with it through and through; and some of its most resplendent and most pathetic passages—passages which are known to every educated Englishman—celebrate the greatness of God, His majesty, His justice, His pity and His grace. The belief has impressed itself upon innumerable national customs. Every week, for example, shops, warehouses, manufactories, banks, merchants' offices, lawyers' offices, accountants' offices are closed, and nearly all the common industries and activities of life are suspended in commemoration of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and to give men the opportunity to meet together to worship God. There are many other reasons for making Sunday a day of rest from ordinary

business, but historically, the day is a great religious festival, and as a great religious festival it is still honoured by a large proportion of the nation.

Again, the churches in which the weekly assemblies for worship are held, are to be seen everywhere —in the poorest parts of great cities and in the wealthiest; their towers and spires rise above the orchards of pleasant villages and stand conspicuous on the edge of lonely moors, and on white cliffs looking down on the sea. Some of them are among the most stately and venerable buildings in the country, and are associated with the most memorable events in our national history. They all bear witness to the glory and goodness of God, and declare that He is to be reverently worshipped and perfectly obeyed.

If, therefore, the question were 'How do we come to *believe* that God is?' it might be a sufficient answer that this belief is the most impressive, the most splendid, the most mighty of our national traditions; that it has been wrought into the very substance of our national thought and life; that it is hardly possible for us to reject and renounce it.

For most practical purposes knowledge and belief may be treated as the same. A very large part of what is properly called our knowledge consists of beliefs which, as we suppose, rest on foundations too solid to be shaken. But in this inquiry it will be convenient to distinguish between *believing* that God is and *knowing* that God is.

A belief may be an inference from a long and complicated chain of reasoning in which many of the links may be unsound; or it may rest on testimony, apparently adequate, but which, if thoroughly tested, might prove untrustworthy; or it may be an unverified tradition. When, instead of saying that we *believe* a thing, we say that we *know* it, we imply that we have an absolute certainty about it; and this certainty is most secure if it is not reached through reasoning or through testimony, but by immediate contact with the fact. I *believe* that Caesar was in England nearly two thousand years ago; if a friend is dining with me I *know* that he is sitting at my table. I *believe* that the famous *Codex Alexandrinus* is in the British Museum; I *know* that the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was standing on my shelves when I left home this morning. How then do we come to *know* that God is? How does the traditional belief become certain knowledge?

II.

The chief difficulty in answering this question arises from the fact which I have already stated—that we are *so made* that we come to believe that God is. We reach the knowledge—few of us can tell how—not by deliberate search, but as the result of contact with the visible universe, with human society, with the manifestations of the power and grace of God in Christ and in the Christian redemption. The process by

which we pass from a mere belief in the existence of God to a certain knowledge of it is, in the case of most men, so gradual that it does not attract their attention while it is going on ; nor can they recall its history afterwards. There was a time when they only believed that God exists—now they know it: how they came to know it they cannot explain, any more than the blind man whose story is told in the Gospel of John could tell how his sight was given to him: like him they would say 'whereas I was blind, now I see.'

Nor is the process of transition from belief to knowledge the same in every case. There is a certain original relation between ourselves and God which renders a knowledge of God possible to us, just as our original relation to the universe renders a knowledge of the universe possible to us; the eternal life is 'the light of men'—and the light 'lighteth every man;' but with different men the action of the light varies. I shall attempt to give an account of a few typical and representative forms of human experience by which men who once only believed that God is came to know it.

(I.) Some years ago a man, who was at that time a member of this congregation, told me the story of the beginning of his own religious life; I wish that I could tell it with the vividness and force with which he told it himself; but I cannot. He said in substance, 'I was living in a small town in one of

the southern counties of England, and one Sunday afternoon I went out into the country for a stroll. It was summer, and after walking for a few miles I lay down on the side of a hill. I saw, stretching to the distant horizon, meadows and orchards and cornfields; the cloudless skies were gloriously blue, and the sun was flooding earth and heaven with splendour. The wonderful beauty filled me with excitement and delight. And then suddenly, through all that I saw, there came the very glory of God. I knew that He was there. His presence, His power and His goodness took possession of me and held me for hours.' Had my friend known his Wordsworth well, he might have quoted, as describing his own experience, the well-known passage from the lines composed near Tintern Abbey:—

> 'I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
> And the round ocean and the living air
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.'

And the effect upon him of the great revelation might have been described in lines taken from the 'Excursion:'—

> 'In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,
> Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.

> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
> Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
> His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
> That made him; it was blessedness and love!'

Before that great experience my friend might have said 'I *believe* that God is;' afterwards he could say 'I *know* that God is.' God came to him in the loveliness and splendour of that summer afternoon.

It is possible that what seemed a sudden and instantaneous discovery was only the last and most striking term in a succession of experiences which had not drawn to themselves any serious attention. For weeks, for months, for years, movements of thought and life which my friend had disregarded may have been preparing him for that supreme moment. But however this may have been, the final experience was a discovery—not an inference. The discovery was valid for himself, but for himself only. If another man to whom he told it chose to say that it was an illusion, I do not know what reply he could have given, except that great numbers of men, sane men, cultivated men, men of different countries, different races, different ages, have had the same experience. But whatever the validity of his discovery might be for other men, to himself it was an absolute certainty. He was *so made*—and, perhaps, we ought to add—he had passed through such a history, that on that afternoon the visible world was lost in the glory of invisible and eternal power and goodness. God

came to him; God found him; he knew it; he could say no more.

This experience has been the experience of multitudes of men. Within and behind all visible and transitory things they have discovered—they have felt—the power of an unseen and eternal Presence. They can give no account of how they became conscious that the august Presence was *there*; but they knew it.

That they are unable to explain how they knew it does not invalidate the trustworthiness of the experience. There are other and more common experiences of which no explanation seems to be possible. We are so made, and the Universe is so made—and there are such relations between ourselves on the one hand, and heaven and earth on the other—that we *see* mountains and rivers and woods and cornfields and clouds and sky and ocean and sun and stars; we are sure that they are *there*; how we see all these wonders we cannot tell; but we see them. And there are such relations between ourselves on the one hand, and God on the other, that in hours of vision we discover behind and within the greatness and glory of the material universe a diviner greatness and a diviner glory. How the discovery is made we cannot tell; but its reality is absolutely certain. We are in the immediate presence of the Eternal. Our faith stands 'not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.'

(II.) A less vivid and less impassioned experience

is described in a passage quoted by Cicero, from a lost treatise of Aristotle. 'If,' says Aristotle, 'there were men who had always lived under ground in pleasant houses, filled with light, adorned with statues and paintings, and furnished with all those things which are possessed by the wealthy; but who, though they had never found their way into the common world, had heard of the existence and authority and power of the gods; and, if after a time, the earth opened, and they were able to escape from those secret dwelling-places and ascend into the regions which we inhabit—*then*, when, without expecting it, they saw the earth and the seas and the sky; when they discovered the vastness of the clouds and the force of the winds, gazed on the sun, his grandeur and beauty, and came to know his power which creates the day by the diffusion of his light through the whole heaven; and when after night had darkened the earth, they saw the heavens glittering and adorned with stars, and the changing splendour of the crescent and the waning moon, the rising and the setting of all these luminaries and their fixed and eternal orbits,—when, I say, they saw all these things they would assuredly declare that there are gods and that these are the works of gods.'[1]

To Wordsworth in hours of clear vision, to my friend on that memorable summer afternoon when his religious life, if it did not absolutely begin, suddenly passed to new heights of power, the visible universe

[1] Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Book ii. cap. 37.

was but the transient vehicle or channel of the divine glory. Its splendours vanished and were forgotten in God. But in the experience described by Aristotle the earth and the ocean, the sky and the clouds, the sun, the moon, and the stars, remain; their greatness and their majesty fill the mind with awe and with delight. They are not lost in God; but the power of God is revealed in them. The more wonderful they are the more wonderful is the power which they illustrate and reveal. Aristotle implies that we fail to find God in the visible universe because we are so familiar with it; and that if, when we were full-grown men, we saw the heavens and the earth *for the first time*, 'we should assuredly declare that there are gods, and that these are the works of gods.' Whether this familiarity is the real cause of the dulness of our vision it is unnecessary to inquire; but I suppose that there are large numbers of men who can recall hours in which they would say that they saw the visible universe as if they had never seen it before,—as if it had just come from the hands of God, or as if they themselves had just received some new inward sense to which all things became new. They *saw* the power and glory of God in the things which God has made. They did not *infer* His existence and greatness from the existence and greatness of the universe; what they came to know was not the result of a process of reasoning but of immediate perception. As Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans, since the creation of the world the unseen perfections of God

'are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity.'[1] They are not reached by logical deduction: they are *seen*, they are *perceived*, by the organs of the mind; how, we cannot tell, any more than we can tell how material things are seen and perceived by the organs of sense; but to the man who has the vision and the perception, 'the eternal power and divinity' of God are just as real as the growing wheat, or the granite rocks, or the stars in the belt of Orion.

(III.) There is another kind of experience by which we come to know that God is. We find an intelligible order in the universe. By this I do not mean that we can discover in the order of Nature what have been described as 'marks of Design.' It may, or it may not, be true that we have a right to argue that as the mechanism of a piano indicates that it had a maker who designed it as an instrument for producing sounds of different pitch and different power, so the structure of the ear indicates that it had a Maker who designed it as an organ for perceiving such sounds,—but that is a question which I am not raising. I am not speaking of 'Design,' but of an intelligible *Order*. And when I say that we find an intelligible order in the universe, I mean, that its various parts are so related and adjusted to each other as to constitute a system. Even the unscientific man perceives that rain and dew and the qualities of the soil

[1] Romans i. 20.

and the heat of the sun are confederate in drawing out the life of the seed and ripening the wheat harvest. He also perceives that when he is in perfect health and vigour, heart and brain and lungs, nerves and muscles, work harmoniously together like the parts of a well-constructed machine. He perceives, too, that there are very wonderful adjustments between himself and large provinces of the material world; he lives by the air which he breathes and by the food which is supplied by the soil, the rivers, and the sea; there are wonderful relations between the eye and the powers of light, and between the ear and the powers of sound. He may have a very limited comprehension of the structure and laws either of the world in general or of his own physical organisation; he may be unable to give any clear account of their mutual relations; but he sees enough to know that his own body is most curiously organised, and that in the universe there are indications of a settled order.

In this country and in our own times, the man most ignorant of natural science is aware that many of those aspects of nature which to himself are as unmeaning as a page of Chinese are clearly intelligible to large numbers of other men; that phenomena in which he can discover no order have been shown to illustrate definite laws. And, further, he has heard that men who have given their time and strength to the mastery of the history and structure of the material universe, are confident that it is

really a universe — one immense and organised system; that every part of it is related to every other part; that nowhere is there chance or confusion; and that to an intellect with adequate powers, adequate means of observation and experiment, and adequate time, every part of it would become intelligible.

But, as I have said, there are parts of the universe in which even a man who knows nothing of physical science finds an intelligible order, just as a man who is ignorant of the science of engineering finds an intelligible order in certain parts of a steam-engine. The visitor who goes into an engine-room for the first time sees that there are ordered relations between the furnace and the boiler, between the boiler and the cylinder, between the cylinder and the piston, between some of the rods and some of the wheels; the relations of many of the parts of the complicated machine to other parts he may not be able to discover; and he may be ignorant of the precise nature of the different kinds of work which the whole machine is intended to do; but he sees enough of intelligible order in the engine to know that its order has been intelligently determined. He does not reach this conclusion by laborious reasoning; it is a direct perception.

When I read Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, no reasoning is necessary to make me certain that there is an intellect—like my own but immensely greater—behind the noble and pathetic verses; in the verses

this intellect reaches me and acts upon me; it comes into immediate contact with me; I feel and submit to its power. And so, when a man perceives intellectually the nice adjustments in a steam-engine and the ordered relations between its different parts, the intellect which determined the adjustments and relations reaches and acts upon him; comes into immediate contact with him; its action and power are known by direct perception—not by inference merely.

Nor do I by mere inference discover a Mind of transcendent greatness behind the intelligible order of nature. Through that order the Mind which determined it reaches me and acts upon me, as the mind of the poet reaches me and acts upon me through his verses, and the mind of the engineer through his machine. There are parts of the universe which—like some parts of a poem—may be wholly unintelligible to me; but through the parts which are intelligible the Mind which is behind it makes itself known to me. My knowledge is too limited to allow me to speak with any confidence of the ends which the universe, as a whole, is destined to achieve, just as when I am in an engine-room my knowledge may be too limited to allow me to speak with any confidence of all the work which the engine was built to perform; but the mind which is behind the engine reaches me, acts upon me, through those parts of it which, as I perceive, are mutually and intelligibly adjusted to each other, and the Mind which is behind

the universe reaches me, acts upon me, through those parts of it where I perceive an intelligible order.

> 'This is the glory,—that in all conceived,
> Or felt or known, I recognise a mind
> Not mine but like mine,—for the double joy,—
> Making all things for me and me for Him.'[1]

It is contended that the theory of Evolution has, finally and for ever, broken down the whole argument for the existence of God derived from evidences of what has been called Design in the visible creation; that we ought not to say that birds have wings in order that they may fly, but that they fly because they have wings; that we ought not to say that the human eye was designed by the wisdom and power of God in order that man might be able to see, but that he sees because, as the result of long ages of development and the survival of the fittest, he is so fortunate as to have eyes.[2] For my immediate purpose, as I have already said, it is quite unnecessary to discuss what measure of truth there is in this contention—whether it is effective against the substance of the argument from Design, or only against the form in which that argument has been commonly stated. I have said nothing about Design: but I have said that in the intelligible order of the universe the Intelligence which is behind the universe reaches us just as in the intelligible language of a poem the intelligence that is behind the poem reaches us, and

[1] Robert Browning: 'Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau' (First Edition), p. 40.

[2] Note C.

just as in the intelligible adjustments of parts of a steam-engine the intelligence that is behind the steam-engine reaches us.

It is to no purpose to say that the curious and wonderful organisation of all living things can be shown to have come from processes of development extending over countless milleniums—processes which have been always going on according to fixed laws and have never been interrupted by the interference of the Mind of the Creator; it may be so; but it still remains true that where I find intelligible order I am in immediate contact with the action of the Intelligence which ordered it. I am so made that when there is intelligible order I perceive the Intelligence which ordered it.

If it could be shown to me that a printed book containing an elaborate account of the anatomy of the human body was the result of the action of forces working through countless millenniums under fixed and unvarying laws, I should still be certain that the book which was intelligible to my mind had its origin in a mind which, in some respects at least, was like my own; and I should find in the forces which formed the book, with its several chapters, that, taken together, covered the whole subject of which it treated—with its regular sentences, each one with a clear and intelligible sense—and with its illustrative diagrams—I say that I should find in the forces which formed the book—through whatever immense cycles they had been acting, and how-

ever rigid the laws which determined their action—I should find in those forces the action of a Mind—with powers similar to my own, though infinitely greater. And if in a book which gives an intelligible account of the curious and wonderful structure of the human body I find the signs of the action of Intelligence, I also find the signs of the action of Intelligence in that curious and wonderful structure itself.

There are other and, to myself, more impressive forms of experience by which a traditional belief in God's existence passes into immediate knowledge of Him; but the illustration of these must be reserved for another sermon.

The main point on which I have insisted this morning is that God's existence is made certain to us—not by reasoning—but by experience. God is perceived and known by the organs of the mind just as the material world is perceived and known by the organs of sense.

The World, Self, God—these are the ultimate realities; each must be known by experience if known at all. If it is declared—as it has been declared—that we have no immediate knowledge of Self, but only of the innumerable thoughts, emotions, desires, volitions of which we are successively conscious, it is impossible to demonstrate the existence of Self. If, again, the existence of Self is declared to be the only object of immediate knowledge, the intellect can construct no bridge by which we can pass to the

existence of the World, and, as many of you know, we shall be compelled to accept a theory of pure idealism. If Self and the World are declared to be the only objects of immediate knowledge, the intellect can construct no bridge by which we can pass to the existence of God. If, finally, Self and God are declared to be the only objects of immediate knowledge we shall be separated by impassable gulfs from the World ; it will be a dream, without substance and reality.

But we are so made, and are placed under such conditions, that these great realities—the World, Self, and God—enter into our experience, are known, not by inference, but by immediate knowledge.

II

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD—II.

'*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*'—1 Cor. ii. 5.

The forms of experience of which I gave some account in the discourse which I have already delivered on this text, have great and enduring value. But there are, I believe, some Christian people—excellent Christian people—to whom God has never been revealed in the immensity and glory of the visible universe, in its unchanging order, in its splendour and beauty, or in its sternness, its terror, and its majesty. They *believe* that God created it, for they have inherited the tradition that He is the Creator of all things; but they do not *know*—by any immediate knowledge—that He created it. If, when they are present at public worship, a hymn is sung or a psalm chanted celebrating the greatness of God as manifested in sun and moon and stars of light, in fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy winds fulfilling His word, in orchards and cornfields and the cattle on a thousand hills, they sing it coldly, with no delight, and no passion; to them the hymn, the chant, is not

really an act of worship; for they have never seen for themselves the glory of God either in the heavens above or the earth beneath.

But where the manifestations of God's 'everlasting power and divinity' in 'the things which are made' are not discovered, or are regarded with indifference, there is always loss and peril to the spiritual life. For in the revelation of God which comes to us through the immensity of the universe, through its vast duration, and through the steadfastness of its laws, there is something to subdue presumption, to remind us of the limitations of our powers, to impress us with the contrast between God's infinite and eternal greatness and our own frailty. It rebukes and represses an irreverent familiarity with the Eternal; it adds to the steadiness and sobriety of the religious life; and deepens its awe and its fear. And further, those who fail to find God in the material creation, and who think of Him as active only in the spiritual world, will not be likely to find Him in their common life, in which they are constantly dealing with material things. They will cultivate an artificial and pernicious form of spirituality. They will think of religion as consisting exclusively in prayer and worship and meditation on things unseen. Commerce and the pursuits of industry will be withdrawn from God's control. Their morals will not be Christian morals. If the farmer is to make his ploughing and sowing and reaping part of the service which he renders to God, he must find God in the material

world; he cannot work with God in his farming, unless he sees that God is working with him in the life of the seed, and in the gracious powers of the soil, of the sun's heat, and of the rain.

I do not, therefore, depreciate the worth of that knowledge of God which is given to us through the visible creation. But this morning I shall endeavour to show how we may come to know Him in other and higher forms of His activity.

I.

(I.) There is a great contrast between moral and physical laws. In the visible creation we find an order which is fixed and invariable. This is the assumption of all the natural sciences, and this alone renders them possible. For example, Sir Isaac Newton laid the foundations of modern physical astronomy by the discovery of the law that 'every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle with a force directly proportioned to the mass of the attracting particles and inversely to the square of the distance between them.' He did not say that every particle of matter *ought* to exert this force of attraction on every other particle, but that it actually exerts this force; if, in any case—even a single case—it were demonstrated that the force was not exerted, the law would cease to be a law. Or, to take another and more homely illustration, water boils at a temperature of 212° when the barometer stands at 30° or

just under, showing an atmospheric pressure of 15 lbs. on the square inch. Ascend a mountain, and, if the atmospheric conditions remain the same, the pressure will diminish as you ascend; and as the pressure of the atmosphere is diminished less heat will be required to bring water to the boiling point. If at the foot of the mountain the barometer stands at 30°, it will have sunk below 29° when you have ascended rather more than a thousand feet, and then water will boil at a temperature of 210° instead of 212°. When we say that this is a law, we do not mean that water *ought* to boil at a lower temperature high up a mountain than in the valley beneath, but that it actually boils at a lower temperature the higher you ascend; if in any case it did not—and there were no accidental conditions to account for the irregularity—the law would be a law no longer.

When we pass into human life we come into the presence of laws of quite another kind—so different, indeed, that confusion arises from calling them by the same name. Let me attempt to explain the difference between them.

That within certain limits we are morally free—free to yield or to refuse to yield to the interior impulses or the external inducements to follow particular lines of conduct, is a fact to which the consciousness of the race bears definite witness. Of this we are certain, if we are certain of nothing else. We do not merely believe it—we know it. If an old friend has suffered great misfortunes, and we are rich enough

to give him effective assistance, we are free to determine whether we will keep our money or whether we will relieve our friend. If we have the opportunity of inflicting serious injury on a man who has wronged us, we are free to determine whether we will avenge the wrong or refuse to avenge it.

But while we are thus vividly conscious of our freedom, we are also vividly conscious that there are laws which claim to determine how the freedom should be exercised. They exert no compulsion; but they speak with authority. They cannot compel obedience, for the obedience they demand is a moral obedience, and if the obedience were compelled, it would cease to be moral. They may therefore be disobeyed. But no amount of disobedience can make them cease to be laws. In this they stand in the most striking contrast with mere physical laws. If—to use one of the illustrations which I used just now—if it could be proved that with the barometer at 30°, and no disturbing causes, distilled water had refused to boil when raised to a temperature of 212° —if it had refused in a single case—the physical law which determines the boiling-point of water would cease to be a law. But the moral law which asserts the obligation of truthfulness would be a law still, even if it could be proved that half the population of England were liars. A physical law declares what actually *is*—what actually *happens*; a moral law declares what *ought* to be—what *ought* to happen.

This mysterious authority is always present with

us and present with us everywhere, at home and in foreign lands, in solitude, when we are with friends, and when we are among strangers, in our business and in our pleasures, in our private and in our public life. I do not mean that we are born with a set of laws impressed upon our minds for the government of conduct,—laws which we can express in definite words and embody in a complete code covering all the details of human duty; nor do I mean that we can ever, as the result of experience, construct such a code even for ourselves, much less for other men. But as we can distinguish by a natural faculty between Light and Darkness and between different degrees of Light and Darkness, so we can distinguish by a natural faculty between Right and Wrong and between different degrees of moral worth and moral baseness. We are so made, and the original powers of our nature are, by the constitution of society and of the order of the universe, so developed, that, as occasions arise, we see for ourselves that of two alternative courses one is morally better than the other, and ought to be followed,—or, to use more common language, that one is right and the other wrong; and then we feel the pressure of the invisible and supreme authority, requiring us at all costs to choose the right and to refuse the wrong.

It is possible for us, no doubt, to commit grave errors in relation to the right or wrong of concrete lines of conduct. For in all moral conduct there are two distinct elements,—the inward spirit or motive

by which we are governed and the outward actions by which we give effect to that spirit or motive. About the outward actions we have to deliberate, and to collect the information that is necessary to guide our judgment: and, after we have done our best, our information may be defective or our judgment may err. If in a complicated business transaction a man has a sincere desire to act honestly,—if he takes trouble to discover all the claims that other men have upon him,—if in doubtful points he accepts the decision of an impartial person, or even gives the decision against his own interest—we say that he is an honest man, even though it should turn out that the settlement is an unjust one and gives him an undue advantage over his partners or creditors. It is the rightness or wrongness of the motive and spirit of an action which determines our moral approval or disapproval of the man that does it,—not the sufficiency or insufficiency of his information, unless he is morally blameable for not taking an adequate amount of trouble to get all the information that he needed for his guidance;—not the soundness or unsoundness of his judgment, unless he is morally blameworthy for haste and recklessness.

But to return to the main point: I have said that whenever a man sees that of alternative actions, or alternative courses of action, one is morally better than the other, he knows that at whatever cost—cost of ease, of health, of property, of reputation, of friendships, of positions of honour, of opportunities

for serving mankind—he is bound to choose it. He can have no doubt of the obligation. When once he has discovered which is morally the better course, all deliberation is over; the obligation to choose it is final and supreme.

But he may not have the courage and fidelity to choose it; or, having chosen it, he may be too indolent or too irresolute to give effect to his choice; or in a careless hour he may be assailed and overcome by sudden and unexpected temptation; or he may have formed habits which are too firmly fixed to be easily broken; or his moral vision may be temporarily obscured and it ceases to be clear and certain to him that the difficult and painful path is the right one—the only right one; he thinks that the path which he rejected—the easier and the pleasanter path—is, after all, quite safe and honourable. What happens then? We can all answer that question for ourselves.

But I will tell you what often happens. A man who has deliberately refused to choose the right—or who, having chosen it, has not stood by his choice—is often restless and ill at ease. He tries to forget his offence and, if he cannot forget it, to palliate or even to justify it. He succeeds perhaps for a time; but there comes an hour in which the remembrance of his wrong-doing returns, and he cannot dismiss it. Why it should return he cannot tell; he was perfectly happy and light-hearted just before it came; he was not in a meditative mood; there was nothing, so far as he can see, to recall it; but it has come and it

remains ; he is compelled to think of it. The moral atmosphere is perfectly clear, and the dimness which for a time came over his moral vision has passed away. He sees, as plainly as when he was called upon to make his original choice, that the course which he has failed to follow was the right course, and that the course which he has actually followed was the wrong. It is an awful time. That he is a guilty man is a conviction pressed upon him by an irresistible force. Guilty of what? Of disregarding his own sense of what was morally right? That does not give a complete account of his offence and his misery. He has violated the sacred and supreme Law—a Law, the authority of which he has recognised but did not create—a Law which is without him and above him, as well as within him.

But the Moral Law is after all an idea—an abstraction ; and he is conscious that in his wretchedness he has to do—not with a mere idea, a mere abstraction—but with an august and awful Force. He begins to understand that there is a 'Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness ;' for he is in immediate contact with It and he has provoked Its hostility. A Power!—It is more than a Power. *It deals with him as a living Person deals with a living person.* It rejects his excuses. It forces him to confront his guilt. It scourges him. It is inexorable in the sternness of its righteousness. But *righteousness is the attribute of a Person—not of a mere Power* ; the Power which insists on righteousness must have a living

Person behind It. In this dark and dreadful time the man discovers that God has come to him—the Living God; henceforth he does not need any proof that God is: he knows it for himself.

(II.) Nor is this a complete account of his experience. You remember the great words of Butler: 'There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly: *and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.*'[1]

The dread of the future, which often fills the heart of a man who has discovered his guilt, is a dread, not of the evil and painful consequences which, by the constitution of human nature and of the social order naturally follow wrong-doing, but a dread, as Butler says, of 'a higher and more effectual sentence' than that which his own conscience pronounces on his wrong-doing. It is a dread of the condemnation, the resentment, and the just hostility of a Power above nature.

[1] Sermons on Human Nature: Sermon II. *Works* (Oxford 1850), vol. i. p. 23.

The sensualist discovers that although the kindly ministries of science may alleviate the physical sufferings which are the natural result of physical excesses, he has still to reckon with an awful moral Power whose authority he cannot defy, and whose wrath he cannot placate. The man who has committed moral offences of other descriptions, knows that he has not merely to dread the public shame and dishonour, and the exile from the society of all who have not themselves forfeited every claim to moral respect and confidence, which will come upon him if his offences are known;—these social penalties will not be inflicted if his crimes are concealed; and if he has wealth, high rank, or the influence which belongs to a great position, he may succeed in concealing them;—but, even if they are concealed from men, they cannot be hidden from that mysterious, awful Presence, of whose existence he has become certain for the first time during his moral agony. The terror he feels is not created by a conviction that there are inexorable laws which, of themselves, inflict just punishment on men for their evil deeds, but by the discovery that there is a supreme, an eternal Judge, absolutely just, with perfect knowledge, irresistible power, from whose judgment there can be no appeal, in whose Hand his breath is, and whose are all his ways, a Judge before whom he is already standing, and who at any moment may call him to give account of the deeds done in the body.

By such experiences as these—though in less

intense and tragic forms than those which I have described—large numbers of men have come to know for themselves that God is, and that He is a Living, Personal God, who will judge them according to their works.[1]

II.

But I suppose that in a country like our own the traditional belief in God's existence more commonly passes into an immediate and certain knowledge of Him under the power of the Christian Gospel, the institutions, worship, and life of the Christian Church, and the manifestation of the divine glory in the earthly history of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(I.) The experiences which prepare the soil of the human heart for receiving the good seed—'the word of the kingdom'—are infinitely varied. One man is conscious of moral failure: he may not be guilty of gross and flagrant vice, but he is always falling short of his moral ideal; the good which he would, he does not; the evil which he would not, that he does: even when he keeps the higher law in the outward act, he fails to keep it in the inward spirit from which he knows that the act derives its chief grace and value: he is oppressed, disabled, fettered by invisible and hostile powers: and he hears that the Lord Jesus Christ has proclaimed liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; that to those

[1] Note D.

who trust Him He gives the freedom of the sons of God and power to keep God's commandments. Another man has a vague but disturbing sense of the limitations of his life and its incompleteness; and his imagination is kindled by what he hears of the infinite horizons of Christian faith and hope, the access to God which is possible to men through Christ, the fulness of the power of those who have found God in Him, the depth of their peace, their knowledge of things eternal and unseen. Another, whose conscience is scourging him for his sins, and who is suffering tortures of remorse, remembers that the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins and that Christ is the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Another is friendless and desolate, and he finds in some obscure home a poor and lonely man who is always cheerful and buoyant because he is conscious that God is with him. Another, who has been haunted by some transcendent and inaccessible vision of moral and spiritual beauty, is fascinated by the mysticism of the Christian life, by what he hears of the sanctity which is possible through union with Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Another, with ruined fortunes, begins to think of the security of the treasure which is laid up in Heaven. Another, with broken health, longs for the power and blessedness of the endless life. Another, who is fevered with an unsatisfied thirst for love, is moved and excited by the good news of the infinite love of God for man-

kind revealed in Christ. Another, who is restlessly but blindly feeling after an ascent to some higher level of being, discovers that, through Christ, men may become the sons of God. Another is suddenly touched by the wonder and mystery of the worship of the Church; he had listened before to hundreds of hymns and to hundreds of prayers; he had sometimes been melted into emotion while he listened to them; he had had his devout moods, and had supposed that they had made him a better man; but now, for the first time, he sees vividly what worship really is; men like himself are speaking to God as to a Living Person; why should not he speak? may he speak with the certainty that God will listen to him?

Then follows the great venture of faith. A cry goes up to God from the very depths of the soul; a cry, not of despair, but of faltering trust and hope, for it is the answer to a 'Divine word' which came to men through prophets or apostles, or the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and has been interpreted, to generation after generation, in the sorrows and the joys of penitents, in the righteousness and blessedness of saints. The cry is answered; sometimes with startling suddenness; sometimes, as it seems, after long delay. But whether earlier or later, the answer comes; and the man knows that it comes from the Living God.

Some Christian people are certain that in the early days of their religious life special manifestations of

God were granted to them. They had been praying earnestly day after day for many weeks, but the clouds would not break; they did not dare to hope that their prayers were heard: and then, one day, the room in which they were praying seemed, as some one said to me not long ago, to be 'filled with God.' Or they were meditating on divine things—brooding over them—and the limitations of the flesh seemed to be dissolved and the invisible and eternal world was revealed to them. These experiences are, I believe, much more frequent than many of us suppose. The persons to whom they come, rarely speak of them. I believe that they seldom, if ever, come to those who passionately desire them. If they are regarded as evidences of great saintliness, or even as evidences that sin has been forgiven and the life of God received, they are very perilous. It is my impression that they are most commonly given to the young and the ignorant. If they are not illusions created by the imagination—and I believe that in many cases they are not—they are to be regarded as divine acts of condescension to the weakness of faith and the imperfect development of the spiritual life. They make nothing certain to a man concerning himself; all that they do is to assure him that God is, and that God is near.

But these assurances come to most Christian men and women in other and less doubtful ways. Divine truths are made clear and vivid to them in a light which they know is light from Heaven. Divine

words, prove and penetrate, and then take possession of the soul with a power which they know to be the power of the Living God. The love of God—God's love for them—is shed abroad in their hearts. They are conscious that by the infinite mercy of God they are justified in Christ: how they are conscious of this, is to themselves inexplicable; but they are certain of it. They are conscious, too, of access through Christ by faith into that 'grace' in which all the saints have stood. In their spiritual experience divine wonders have been wrought in answer to their prayers—wonders as ordinary divine as any of the miracles which were wrought by Christ during His earthly life. There are not only subjective experiences which, by inference, they attribute to the operation of God's Spirit: there are experiences of quite another kind in which they are immediately conscious of divine acts; and behind the divine acts, they are conscious that there is the Living God.

I do not say that experiences of this kind are recurring constantly. I cannot tell; to saints they may come every day. And on the other hand, I have known good people who were never cheered by them, and who, to use their own phrase, suggested perhaps by a brief treatise of Thomas Goodwin's, were 'children of God walking in darkness;' but I suppose that to ordinary Christian people who are even moderately faithful to Christian duty, they come often enough to enable them to bear testimony from their own experience that God is,

and that He is near to those who trust and serve Him.

(II.) The truth which I have endeavoured to maintain in this and in the preceding discourse is, that our knowledge of God's existence is the result, not of reasoning, but of experience. Or, to put it in another way, our traditional belief in the existence of God passes into a certain knowledge of it through immediate contact with the expressions and manifestations of the thought of God, the power of God, the life of God. But if this is true, then whatever doubts concerning God's existence may remain after all that He has revealed of Himself through the physical universe, and to the conscience, and in the spiritual experience of devout men, may be expected to disappear in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ—'the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance.'

It appears to be very generally taken for granted that unless a man believes in the existence of God it can be of no use to preach the Christian Gospel to him; that an atheist must be made a theist by the demonstrations of what is known as Natural Theology before he can become accessible to the power of the story of Christ and of the redemption which Christ has achieved for mankind. But Theism may be as serious an obstacle to the reception of the Christian Gospel as Atheism; for the God of many theists is a God so remote from man that it is inconceivable to them that He should have become 'flesh' at the impulse of an infinite love for our race, and

should have lived a life of conflict and of suffering, and died a death of shame and horror for our salvation. And though it may be true, in the order of reasoned thought, that there must be a belief in the existence of God before a man can believe that Christ came from God, it is not true in the order of human experience.

The story of Christ is, in fact, constantly creating a real belief in the existence of God. Among Christian people it is constantly adding to the strength of that belief. I suppose that there are many men who, while reading the Four Gospels, have felt as Moses felt when he saw the bush burning but unconsumed, and heard God speaking to him from the flame; as Elijah felt when after the strong wind which rent the mountains, and after the earthquake and the fire there came 'a still small voice.' If through wonders, appealing to the physical senses, God could make Himself known, how much more possible is it for Him to make Himself known through a human life? Philip said to our Lord, 'Show us the Father,' and our Lord answered, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' John wrote: 'The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us.' The story of that manifestation still shines with a divine glory; and those who have failed to find God in sun or star, mountain or sea, in the structure of plants or birds or other living things,

—those who have failed to find God even in the mysterious and awful Power which enforces the obligations of duty, find Him in Christ. They may be unable to give any account of their great discovery; but they are as certain that the glory of God broke upon the world in Christ, as they are that the sun has risen when they see the crimson and purple and golden splendours of the dawn. They ask no proof—they want none—that in their substance the Four Gospels contain a true story. The genius of man can do great things; but one thing it cannot do—it cannot create the story of a human life in which countless millions of men, through generation after generation, and in many lands, shall find the very glory of God—a glory transcending all that they had discovered in the grandeur of the visible creation and the majesty and sanctity of the Moral Law.

It is not the contention of these Discourses that by every man 'the invisible things of God,' 'even His everlasting power and divinity, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made;' or that every man discovers, through conscience, the Living and Personal Authority which confirms and enforces the obligations of righteousness; or that every man finds God by recognising in the words of Christ the accent of the Divine Voice, and in His transcendent perfection the characteristic grace and sanctity of the life of God. God comes to one man in one way, to

another man in another. He may come to some men in ways of which nothing has been said in these discourses—in ways unknown to those to whom He comes; they only know that His awfulness or grace, His glory or His terror, has broken upon them. We cannot choose for ourselves by what way He shall come to us, or the hour in which we shall have the great experience of His coming. He waits for the favourable moment in which He is likely to be received with awe and reverence, with love and joy. We on our part should endeavour to live the life which will not repel Him. He may be repelled by the flagrant neglect of common duty. He may be repelled by the self-complacency of virtue. He may be repelled by the absorption of the soul in the satisfactions and the delights, or in the sorrows and cares, of this mortal life. If—though we ourselves have no firm faith in the reality of His existence and of His nearness to us—we have come to think that the experience of countless multitudes of men who declare that He has come to them and has greatly blessed them, counts for something; if we have a vague sense of dissatisfaction with a life in which God is unknown; if we have begun to think it possible that we fail to see His glory, and to hear His voice, because our vision is dim and our ears are heavy; if we are not unwilling to believe that this insensibility may be the result of faults in ourselves which as yet we have not discovered, and which, therefore, we have not endeavoured to correct; we

shall humbly and reverently and hopefully wait for God to make Himself known to us as He has made Himself known to other men. We shall put ourselves in the way of receiving Him. We shall be careful to live up to the moral light which has reached us, lest our unfaithfulness should deprive us of the power of knowing Him, or should be punished by the withholding of the knowledge. We shall cultivate the society of those to whom God is known. We shall brood in private over the mysteries of the world and of the life of man. We shall attend the worship of the Church—watching for the dawn of the divine day.

Sometimes we shall speak into the darkness and ask whether God is there. Sooner or later, if we seek Him we shall find Him; and finding Him, a new splendour will fall upon the world, and we shall rejoice that, knowing God, we are akin to Him, and that we have an eternal inheritance in His perfection and His blessedness.

III

THE HUMANITY OF OUR LORD

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.—JOHN i. 14.

NEARLY all that we know of our Lord we learn from the Four Gospels and from the other writings included in the New Testament;[1] but the brief mention of Him in the pages of the greatest of Roman historians is infinitely pathetic and impressive. Towards the end of the reign of the emperor Nero, a great part of the city of Rome was consumed by fire. The palace of Nero, innumerable private houses, altars and temples associated with the most sacred events and the most famous names in the history of the Roman people, the riches which had been acquired by Roman victories—treasures of Greek art and precious books and manuscripts which preserved the genuine text of the great works of ancient genius—were destroyed by the flames. There was a wide-spread belief that the city had been set on fire by the secret orders of Nero himself, who was supposed to desire the glory of founding a new city and calling it by his own name. And Tacitus tells us that to suppress this suspicion

[1] Note E.

Nero 'fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class, hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus,' he goes on to say, 'from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius, at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate; and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out, not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful, from every part of the world, find their centre and become popular.'[1] This is all that the Roman historian has to say about our Lord. The Son of God, who became flesh for us sinners and our salvation has hardly a place among the emperors, statesmen, and generals, whose glory and shame, whose virtues and crimes, appeared to Tacitus to constitute the chief part of the history of the world. Tacitus has less to say about Christ than about the men who shared the follies and the debaucheries of Nero, and about the miserable women who were the objects and victims of his lust; and what he says is to our Lord's dishonour. To the great historian, a man of penetrating genius and of profound moral earnestness, our Lord was nothing more than an obscure and fanatical Jew, who had been put to death for His crimes by the Roman governor of Judea, and who had become infamous by the execrable superstition which He had founded. In the pages of history as well as in the pages of

[1] *Annals*, book xv. c. 44. Church and Brodribbs' Translation.

prophecy, 'the servant of the Lord' is 'numbered with the transgressors.'

But the words which I have quoted remind us that to Tacitus our Lord had a place—though a shameful place—in the actual history of mankind. He was a Jew. There were men in Judea who knew Him well. He had stood at the bar of the Roman governor of the province. There must have been witnesses, true or false, who professed to have heard the words or to have witnessed the deeds for which He was condemned to die. There were officers who had executed the sentence. To Tacitus, our Lord was one who had lived a real human life—a man and nothing more—but still a man.

To the friends of our Lord—to Peter, James, and John, and the rest of the Apostles—He was also a man—a man whose face and form and dress they knew, to whose voice they had often listened,—sometimes in the synagogues, sometimes in the courts of the temple, sometimes in the open air, sometimes in their own houses ; He was a man with whom they had walked across the fields of Galilee, and on the shores of the lake of Gennesareth, and in the streets of Jerusalem, and over the Mount of Olives ; they had eaten with Him and slept under the same roof with Him ; and some of them had seen Him standing at the bar of Pilate, and hanging on the cross. To them He was infinitely more than a man—but still He was a man. The faith of those who knew

and loved Him during His earthly life was the faith of those who became His disciples after His death and resurrection. Paul writes, 'There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, *Himself man*, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.'[1]

I.

But very early in the history of the Christian Church, and even before all the original Apostles had passed away, there were persons who had received Christian baptism and professed to be Christians to whom it seemed incredible that our Lord was really Man—that according to the vigorous statement of John in the text, He 'became flesh.' The form in which John affirms the truth was, no doubt, suggested by the heresies which denied it. There was a very common belief in the ancient world that human sin has its origin and roots in the flesh and blood of the body, and that all matter is necessarily evil; to disengage and separate the higher and spiritual life of man from his physical nature was therefore supposed to be the true discipline of moral and spiritual perfection.[2] There were teachers in the Church claiming to speak in the power of the Spirit of God who

[1] 1 Timothy ii. 5.

[2] There were some, however, who stated the opposition of Matter to Goodness in a less extreme form; they did not maintain that Matter is necessarily *evil*, but that it is immensely distant from the life and perfection of the Eternal, and that the material universe must have been the creation of a Power inferior to the Supreme.

taught this doctrine, and to whom it was inconceivable that our Lord could have had a body like our own. John was thinking of these teachers when he said in his epistle, 'Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist.'[1]

A few years later Ignatius, in his epistle to the church at Tralles, and in his epistle to the church at Smyrna, protests vehemently against the same error. To the Trallians he says: 'Be ye deaf, therefore, when any man speaketh to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born, and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth; who moreover was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him. . . . But if it were, as certain persons who are godless, that is, unbelievers, say, that He suffered only in semblance, . . . why am I in bonds?'[2]

The heresy assumed many forms. There were some, for example, who taught that Jesus who was born of Mary was a man and nothing more, and that the Christ was an emanation of God who descended

[1] 1 John iv. 2, 3.

[2] Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part II. *S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp*, vol. ii. p. 557.

upon Him at His Baptism, and in whose power all our Lord's miracles were wrought, but who departed from Him before the Crucifixion. On this theory Jesus Himself was not the Christ, but only the temporary home and instrument of the Christ. And so John says, 'Every spirit that confesseth not *Jesus* is not of God.'[1] To confess the *Christ* is not enough; the true faith requires the acknowledgment that Jesus who shared our flesh was Himself the Christ of God. Another theory—a very rude and simple one—was that the senses of those who thought that they saw and heard and touched our Lord during His earthly life, were deceived by the continuous action of the divine power; men saw and heard and touched Him as they see and hear and touch a person in a vision. Another theory attributed to our Lord the power to clothe Himself in a form which seemed human but was not; He appeared to men as the angels appeared to Abraham. To escape what might seem to be the decisive proof of the reality of His human body, derived from the fact that He was crucified, and that His dead body was laid in Joseph's tomb, it was contended that on the way to Calvary Simon of Cyrene, who carried the Cross, was changed into the form of our Lord, and that it was Simon who was crucified while our Lord looked on and mocked at the defeat of His enemies.

If our Lord was really man He must have had, not only a body of flesh and blood like our own, but an

[1] 1 John iv. 3.

intellect subject to human limitations and laws: He must also have had an emotional and moral nature like ours, capable of hope and fear, of grief and anger and love; and a spiritual nature like ours, accessible to temptation and dependent for its perfection on the strength and grace of God.

Apollinaris, who was bishop of Laodicea in the second half of the fourth century, while acknowledging that our Lord had a real human body derived from Mary, and a human 'soul' corresponding to the physical life which we share with the animal creation, maintained that in Christ the place of the higher life of man—the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual life—was filled by the Eternal Word. Apollinaris was a profound and an acute thinker, and held a great position among the theologians of his time. He protested vehemently against the charge of heresy, and contended that while faithful to the doctrine of the Church he was anxious to make clearer and more certain the Unity of our Lord's Person. But perhaps his theory had its deepest roots in his vigorous conception of moral freedom as an inseparable characteristic of human nature. He believed that absolute freedom of choice between good and evil is essential to the ethical and spiritual nature of man; and argued that if this freedom is attributed to our Lord it must have been possible for Him—as it is possible for every man—to make the evil choice; but Apollinaris maintained that the work of redeeming man from sin requires the power and grace of One who Himself is

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incapable of sinning. It was incredible to him that the salvation of the human race should have been made dependent on the steadfast righteousness of a merely human will.

He was unwilling, however, to admit that his theory denied the true humanity of our Lord. He believed that the Incarnation only revealed the true nature and life of the Eternal Word. The Eternal Word had always been both God and man; humanity had existed from eternity in Him. Or, as it has been put in modern language, the Eternal Word was the 'Archetype' of the human race.[1] And according to Apollinaris it was this divine, yet human, life which constituted the 'reasonable soul' of our Lord.

This theory seemed to offer a solution of some of the most difficult questions relating to our Lord's Person: but the instinct of the Church was right in rejecting it. If the 'reasonable soul' of Christ was not human in the same sense in which His body and His physical life were human, He was not really man; for the 'reasonable soul' is an essential part of humanity. The theory of Apollinaris was condemned by Council after Council. At last he separated from the Catholic Church, and founded a sect which was called by his name.

[1] See Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, div. I, vol. ii. p. 372 (Eng. Transl.) Dorner points out that Apollinaris could not have taught, though he was represented as teaching, that the physical side of our Lord's Humanity existed before His earthly birth. *Ibid.* p. 374.

In the middle of the fifth century (A.D. 451) another theory, which denied the reality—or, at least, the permanence—of our Lord's humanity was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon. Eutyches, the archimandrite of a monastery near Constantinople, maintained what he described as the 'one incarnate nature of God the Word.' It is not easy to form a clear and definite conception of what he meant by this phrase. He was a man of vehement religious zeal, but had neither the philosophical training nor the native philosophical genius which were necessary to the great controversy in which he took so impassioned a part; and his self-confidence was boundless. He appears to have maintained that by the Incarnation the human nature of our Lord was so completely *fused*—if the word may be allowed—with the divine nature that all its characteristic qualities and limitations disappeared. Some of his opponents were accustomed to say that, according to Eutyches, 'the incarnate nature of God the Word' was like Electron —a compound metal produced by melting together silver and gold; and that as the compound metal is neither gold nor silver, so Eutyches taught that the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ was neither human nor divine.

I suppose that there is a very general impression that the great struggles of the Church have been for the maintenance of the Divinity of our Lord; and I have given this brief account of early controversies in order to remind you that there have been struggles—

not less severe or less protracted—for the maintenance of His humanity. It may be thought that these controversies do not concern us; that whatever other article of the Christian Creed, we, in these days, are in danger of denying, our faith in the humanity of our Lord is clear and strong. I am not sure that it is so. I think, for example, that there are many Christian people who practically hold the theory of Apollinaris; they suppose that although our Lord had a human body and a human physical life, which made Him liable to suffer from cold and heat and hunger and thirst and weariness, His intellectual, moral, and spiritual life was divine. Others, again, practically hold the theory of Eutyches; they suppose that our Lord's Divinity was so blended and 'fused' with His Humanity that all the human limitations of His intellectual, moral, and spiritual life disappeared. It may, therefore, be worth while even for us to consider the great truth that in the Lord Jesus Christ the Eternal Word '*became flesh and dwelt among us.*'

II.

The faith of the Church in our Lord's Humanity rests primarily on experience—the experience of those who knew Him during His earthly life. And their experience must also determine our whole conception of the Incarnation. Our theory must be governed by the facts; we shall go far astray if we attempt first to construct a theory and then to force

the facts into agreement with it. What, then, are the facts?

(1) Mary, his mother, was the friend of the original apostles and disciples of our Lord, and, after His crucifixion, she lived with the apostle John. I can imagine that she would tell Salome her sister, and Mary and Martha of Bethany, and the other women who were friends of our Lord, the things which for many years she had kept secret, 'pondering them in her heart.'[1] She would tell them of the angel who came to her at Nazareth, and from whom she learnt that she was to have a Son who was to be 'great,' and who would 'be called the Son of the Most High;' and to whom the Lord God would give the throne of his father David; that the Holy Ghost was to come upon her and the power of the Most High to overshadow her; and that therefore her child would be 'called holy, the Son of God.'[2] And there was the story of the shepherds, who, while they were keeping watch by night over their flock in the fields below Bethlehem, saw the glory of God and heard the words of an angel who told them that there had been born that day 'in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord;' and then they heard the song of 'a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men, in whom He is well pleased.'[3] And there was the story of the wise men who had come from the East and found their way

[1] Luke ii. 19. [2] Luke i. 32-35. [3] Luke ii. 8-15.

by the light of a star, and who worshipped her Child as the King of the Jews and offered Him gifts, 'gold, frankincense, and myrrh.'[1] It was a story of wonders, but the centre of them all was a little Child—her Child—who, because there was no room for her in the inn at Bethlehem, was born in a cattle-shed and was laid in the manger. She was His mother, and she had to care for Him as other mothers care for their children. He was a child like the other children in Bethlehem, and when Herod the king, who had heard the story of the wise men from the east, gave orders that all the male children under two years old in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood should be destroyed, He would have perished with the rest but for the warning which Joseph had received from God to take the young child and His mother and flee to Egypt.[2]

And Mary would also tell our Lord's friends how He grew from infancy to childhood, and childhood to youth, increasing in wisdom as well as in height and strength with His increasing years,—a child and a youth to attract the favour both of God and man. Nor was it Mary alone who could tell them of our Lord's childhood, youth, and manhood. James and Jude, to whom two epistles, bearing their names, are attributed in the New Testament, but who do not

[1] Matt. ii. 1-11.

[2] For some considerations which support the trustworthiness of the story of our Lord's childhood in the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel, see *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), pp. 216-220.

appear to have become His disciples till after His resurrection, were his 'brothers.' Salome, the wife of Zebedee, was, in all probability, the sister of Mary His mother, and was therefore His aunt. Her sons, the two apostles James and John, were His cousins; and it was this relationship, as well as the special confidence with which our Lord had treated them, that, perhaps, suggested the request that they might sit, one on His right hand and one on His left hand, in His Kingdom. All these relatives of His, who were well known to the first generation of Christians, could recall our Lord's life in Nazareth before His public ministry began; and it is certain that they never doubted that He was really man. To ordinary persons there was so little to distinguish Him during His early years from the other young people of Nazareth that when He began to teach in the synagogue in which He had worshipped from His childhood His old friends and neighbours were astonished, and said, 'Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not His mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?' Some of them, I dare say, had in their houses simple pieces of furniture which our Lord had made when He worked at the trade of Joseph. Some of them may have lived in houses which our Lord had helped to build, or to enlarge, or to repair. He was one of themselves: He had been one of themselves from His very child-

hood; they could not believe that He was even a prophet; but they were certain that He was really man.

(II.) Nor were there any signs during His public ministry that our Lord had lost any of the characteristics of humanity or had been liberated from any of its limitations.

(*a*) To John and James and the rest of the Apostles it was certain that He had flesh and blood like their own; that He had the same physical wants as other men; that He was capable of the same physical pleasures and sufferings. As He was walking with them from Bethany to Jerusalem in the early morning a few days before His death, He '*hungered*.'[1] On the Cross, fevered by the tortures of crucifixion, He said, 'I *thirst*.'[2] After walking over the steep limestone pass which descends from the south on the plain of Samaria He was '*wearied* with His journey,'[3] and sat down for rest by Jacob's well. When crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat with His disciples He *slept*,[4] and slept so soundly that the storm did not wake Him. He needed a home like other men, but told the scribe who wished to join the company of the disciples that travelled with Him, that while 'the foxes have holes and the birds of the heaven have nests' the Son of Man had not where to lay His head.[5] He *wept* at the grave of His

[1] Mark xi. 12. [2] John xix. 28. [3] John iv. 6.
[4] Matt. viii. 24. [5] Matt. viii. 20.

friend.[1] The woman who had been a sinner wetted His *feet* with her tears.[2] In the house of Simon, Mary of Bethany anointed His feet and His *head* with precious ointment.[3] Judas kissed Him.[4] On the Cross nails were driven through His *hands*,[5] and a spear, after His death, was thrust into His *side* and 'there came out *blood and water*.'[6] When the body of our Lord was taken down from the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea 'wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb'; and Nicodemus and the women who had been our Lord's friends brought spices, after the Jewish custom, to do it honour.[7]

(*b*) That our Lord had a *Body* like our own, that He grew from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood; that He felt hunger and thirst and weariness and physical pain, that He needed food and rest and sleep, is, I suppose, the real belief of ordinary Christian people. It would not be easy, I imagine, to find any one that doubts it, or that feels any serious difficulty about it. But that He had a *Mind* like our own, subject to the same laws and limitations; that He thought as we think; that He ever really learnt anything; that His knowledge, like the knowledge of other children, grew as He grew older, or that at least after He reached manhood there was ever anything of which He was ignorant—this seems to large numbers of people wholly inconsistent with the truth that He

[1] John xi. 35.
[2] Luke vii. 38.
[3] Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3; John xii. 3.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 49.
[5] John xx. 25.
[6] John xix. 34.
[7] Matt. xxvii. 59; John xix. 38-39.

was the Eternal Son of God, the Eternal Word who 'became flesh' for our salvation. Or, if they do not consciously refuse to believe that His mind was really human, they habitually and, as a matter of course, think of Him as liberated from the intellectual limitations to which they know that, not only ordinary men, but inspired prophets and apostles were subject. Clement of Alexandria argued that since our Lord was divine it is incredible that His body required food for its support: it is true that according to the Four Gospels He seemed to need food like other men; but, according to Clement, His physical life and vigour were maintained by a certain holy energy; and He ate and drank for no other purpose than to prevent His disciples from supposing that His Body was unreal and that what they saw was a phantom.[1] And so there are many who argue—or assume unconsciously—that as our Lord was a Divine Person He must necessarily have known all things, and that if He asked questions of other men, it was not to learn anything that He did not already know but to place Himself in human and friendly relations with them. But this is to force the facts of our Lord's life into agreement with an inference from our creed, instead of making our creed the summary expression of the truth contained in the facts.

It is true that our Lord, who did not cease to be the Eternal Son when He became man, knew the Father as we cannot know Him. He knew the Father

[1] *Stromata*, book vi. 9.

immediately, and in the blessedness of His eternal union with the Father which the Incarnation did not dissolve; *we* know the Father through our union with Christ, and as Christ may reveal Him to us. As the Son of man He received from the Spirit of God extraordinary powers for the activities of His earthly ministry. There were times when He penetrated into the innermost thoughts of men; and times when in the power of God He worked wonderful miracles. But supernatural—though inferior gifts—bestowed on prophets and apostles did not obliterate the limitations of their intellectual life; nor did these gifts obliterate the limitations of the intellectual life of our Lord. Mark, who tells us that one morning as He was walking from Bethany to Jerusalem 'He hungered,' adds—'and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves He came, if haply He might find anything thereon.'[1] He did not know, any more than Peter and John knew, whether there were any figs on the tree until He came near enough to it to examine it; and then He found that there were none. On two occasions when there were great crowds of people about Him, many of whom had travelled far to hear Him, He determined to give them food before He sent them away: and on each occasion He asked His disciples, 'How many loaves have ye?'[2] When He asked Philip on one of these occasions, 'Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?' John tells us that 'this He said to prove him; for He Himself knew what He would do.' Yes—our Lord

[1] Mark xi. 12, 13. [2] Mark vi. 38; Mark viii. 5.

knew *what He Himself intended to do*;[1] but to suppose that He knew, before He was told, how much bread the disciples had, or that there was a lad with them who had 'five barley loaves and two fishes,' is to destroy the reality of the narratives and even to suggest that the story of our Lord may be full of illusions. He asked the man who was possessed with devils and lived among the tombs, 'What is thy name?'[2] When He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and met the man whose child the disciples had been unable to cure, He asked, 'How long time is it since this hath come unto him?'[3] At Bethany, when He saw the great sorrow of Mary for the death of Lazarus, He said, 'Where have ye laid him?'[4] Who can imagine that He already knew where Lazarus had been buried, and that when He Himself was so deeply agitated He put the question simply to keep up the appearance that He was like other men?

Surprise is an emotion which can be experienced only by those whose knowledge is limited. It is occasioned by the occurrence or the discovery of what had not been expected. To a mind of infinite knowledge surprise is impossible. But again and again our Lord uses language which, if it represented His real feeling and thought—and to suppose that it did not is irreverence and blasphemy—discloses His astonishment. He had been teaching the people that a man is not really defiled, as they imagined, by eating 'unclean' food; but that he is defiled by sinful

[1] John vi. 5, 6. [2] Luke viii. 30. [3] Mark ix. 21. [4] John xi. 34.

thoughts and words and actions: 'there is nothing from without the man that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those which defile him.'[1] His disciples when they were alone with Him asked for an explanation of what they called the 'parable.' 'And He saith unto them, Are *ye* so without understanding also?'[2] And a little later when He had been warning them against 'the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod,' and they 'reasoned one with another, saying, We have no bread,' our Lord, 'perceiving it, saith unto them, . . . Do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened? . . . Do ye not remember?'[3]

And when He came into 'His own country' and found that, while in other parts of Galilee His teaching and miracles had led large numbers of people to receive Him as a prophet, at Nazareth His old neighbours could not forget that He was 'the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon,' Mark tells us 'He *marvelled* because of their unbelief.'[4]

We have His own authority for the limitations of His knowledge. He had spoken to His disciples of His return to the world, 'on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.' 'But,' He adds, 'of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father only.'[5]

[1] Mark vii. 15. [2] Mark vii. 18. [3] Mark viii. 15-21.
[4] Mark vi. 6. [5] Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32.

The knowledge of our Lord was plainly not co-extensive with the knowledge of God.[1]

(*c*) We find in our Lord the ordinary impulses, emotions, and affections of human nature. He was human in His *friendships*. He felt, as we feel, the charm of particular persons. When the young ruler, who had come to ask Him what he must do to inherit eternal life, declared that he had kept all the commandments from his youth up, our Lord, touched by his ingenuousness, looked upon him and 'loved him.'[2] John was dearer to him than the rest of the Apostles; and, after His exhausting days in Jerusalem, He found solace and refreshment at Bethany in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, whom He 'loved.'[3] And as there are times of great distress and fear when the presence of human friends steadies and supports us, so He wished to have Peter and James and John near Him during His agony in Gethsemane.[4]

He had other human affections and emotions. On a Sabbath day, after the Pharisees and Scribes had begun to excite popular hostility against Him by charging Him with Sabbath-breaking He went into a synagogue, where He found a man who had a 'withered' hand; and they watched our Lord 'whether He would heal the man on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him.' Our Lord asked them whether it was lawful on the Sabbath 'to do good, or to do harm, to save a life or to kill.' They

[1] See Note F. [2] Mark x. 21. [3] John xi. 5. [4] Matt. xxvi. 37.

had not the courage to answer Him. And 'when He had looked round about on them with *anger*, being *grieved* at the hardening of their heart, He saith to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth, and his hand was restored.'[1] We are told, again and again, that our Lord healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind, because he was moved with *compassion* for them.[2] That He felt *surprise* just as we feel it I have already had occasion to remind you, when speaking of the human limitations of our Lord's intellect.

In the story of the death and resurrection of Lazarus there is a still more impressive proof that our Lord shared the common emotions and impulses of human nature. John tells us that when Jesus saw Mary 'weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He *groaned* in spirit and was *troubled*;' and, a verse or two later, we read 'Jesus, therefore, again *groaning* in Himself, cometh to the tomb.'[3] Even if we take the words as they stand, they show that at the grave of Lazarus our Lord felt the same distress that through generation after generation has filled the hearts of countless millions of our race, when standing by the graves of those who were dear to them. But the marginal reading in the Revised Version, which seems to be a more accurate representation of the words of John, suggests that our Lord's anguish was more acute, and, if possible,

[1] Mark iii. 1-5.
[2] *E.g.* Matt. ix. 36, xx. 34; Mark i. 41.
[3] John xi. 33, 38.

more intensely *human* than the sorrow which we feel for a dead friend, or the sympathetic pain provoked by witnessing the grief and desolation of those to whom He was most dear. The margin reads that when Jesus saw Mary 'weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He *was moved with indignation in the spirit and troubled Himself:*' and again that, '*being moved with indignation in Himself*,' He came to the tomb. Let us be thankful that these words were written, and that the memory of our Lord's 'indignation' has not been permitted to pass away. When He saw the bitter sorrow of Mary and the sorrow of the Jews who were with her, and when He stood at the mouth of the grave, there rose in Him an impulse of revolt against the death of His friend, and all the desolation which it had inflicted. It was the same impulse that, in the presence of the greater miseries of the world, has, perhaps, forced some of us to exclaim, 'Has God forgotten to be gracious?' With us that impulsive resentment against the almost intolerable sorrows of our race has too often been associated with resentment against God, and a temporary failure of our confidence in His righteousness and love. The faith of Christ in the love of the Father was too deeply rooted to give way, even for a moment, under the force of the fiercest storm; not for a moment did He feel that the death of Lazarus, and the distress of Mary and her friends, were proofs of God's indifference to human sorrow; but as the flesh of

Christ would naturally have resented and revolted against the touch of fire, so the spirit of Christ—all that was deepest and most central in His life—resented and revolted against the death of Lazarus and the heart-broken sorrow of Mary. '*He was moved with indignation.*' His own supreme sorrow—the agonies and desolation which came upon Him on the cross—He shrank from; but they provoked no resentment. He Himself could endure the most awful woes with perfect submission; it was the sufferings of others that kindled His 'indignation.' The confusion, the pain, the anguish, the death were surely no part of the divine order of the world; they were the visible and awful signs of the defeat of the purposes of the divine goodness. At the grave of Lazarus He was in the very presence of the symbols of the triumph of the enemy that He had come to conquer and destroy: '*He was moved with indignation in the spirit,*'—with indignation against the miseries of the world; and behind the miseries there was the sin which caused them. The impulse of resentment was involuntary with Him as it is with us; but He could yield to it without revolting against God; and so He '*troubled Himself*'; He dwelt upon the miseries which had kindled His resentment; He made its fires burn more fiercely. The Eternal Son of God had indeed, and of a truth become man.[1]

(*d*) I said just now that although the spirit of

[1] Note G.

Christ rose in indignation against the miseries of the world, His faith in the love of the Father was too deeply rooted to give way, even for a moment, under the stress of the severest storm. This raises a question in relation to other experiences of our Lord. Was He ever assaulted by temptation as we are assaulted? On the very first page of Mark's Gospel we are told that immediately after His Baptism 'He was in the wilderness forty days *tempted* of Satan;'[1] and Matthew and Luke give us an account of what we may regard as three typical or representative temptations. Did these temptations involve our Lord in a real conflict with inducements and provocations to sin? Were the temptations as real as His hunger and thirst and weariness and pain?

For myself I cannot doubt it. He was 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'[2] He had to determine before His public ministry began whether, in fulfilling it, He would submit to the extremity of self-sacrifice; whether He would suppress all self-assertion and live and work in a spirit of absolute submission and subordination to the Father; whether in establishing His kingdom He would, at whatever cost, refuse to make any compromise—even any temporary compromise—with the powers of evil. The temptations which assailed Him were real—as real as any temptations by which we ourselves are assailed. He resisted them—as we have to resist—in the power of the Word of God. They were real

[1] Mark i. 13. [2] Heb. iv. 15.

temptations, and had to be mastered and crushed; but the narrative does not suggest that there was any violent conflict. His mind was already made up. He refused to listen to the tempter just as a strong man who has been truthful for years refuses, without an effort, to listen to the temptation to lie, although the lie would open to him the way to fortune, to power, and to fame. To another man the inducements would be overwhelming, irresistible—but not to him; and so Christ, I say, appears to have resisted and overcome, without any violent effort, the temptations which assaulted Him in the wilderness.

But at the close of His ministry He passed through a conflict of a very different kind. In the garden of Gethsemane, a few hours before His death, dark shadows began to deepen around Him. He was filled with distress and with terror; or, as Mark says, He 'began to be greatly *amazed* and sore *troubled*.'[1] His distress was so intense that it seemed as if the very foundations of life were giving way and as if He could bear no more. He said to Peter, James, and John, 'My soul is exceeding *sorrowful*, even unto death.'[2] In His agitation He could not remain with the disciples whom He had asked to be with Him; He 'was parted from them';[3] there was the *restlessness* of great grief. During His prayer He was 'in an agony'; and 'the sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.'[4] What was the cause of this appalling tumult of

[1] Mark xiv. 33. [2] Mark xiv. 34. [3] Luke xxii. 41. [4] Luke xxii. 44.

emotion? It was surely not the fear of mere physical death that so disturbed the soul of our Lord; nor even the fear of the tortures of crucifixion which were to precede death. A thousand martyrs have gone to the flames with buoyant courage. But the supreme hour was near when He was to *bear our sins in His own body upon the tree*;[1] when He, 'who knew no sin,' was to learn, as He had never learned before, what it was to be made 'sin on our behalf';[2] and He was filled with dread. 'Father, all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from Me; howbeit, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.'[3] He is resolved to die for the sin of the world; but in His human weakness He shrinks and trembles; and His heart is shaken with terror. There is an agony of conflict. If He dies He must die freely—die by His own choice. He stands fast: the final temptation is mastered; and the world is saved!

For Christ, as for us, there were the two paths—the lower and the higher, the path of ease and the path of resolute righteousness, of renunciation, of self-sacrificing love. He had to make His election between them. His *moral* nature was like our own. The Eternal Son of God had, indeed, and of a truth become man.[4]

(*e*) In His supreme conflict He was not self-sustained: He prayed to the Father, and from the Father, through the ministry of 'an angel from

[1] 1 Peter ii. 24.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[3] Mark xiv. 36.
[4] Note H.

heaven,' He received strength.[1] And in all the great hours of His ministry He appears to have spent an exceptional amount of time in prayer, and to have prayed with exceptional earnestness. 'He withdrew Himself into the deserts and prayed' when 'great multitudes' were first drawn together by His teaching and miracles.[2] Before choosing the twelve, 'He went out into the mountain to pray; and He continued all night in prayer to God.'[3] He was 'praying alone,'[4] immediately before Peter's great confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,'[5] which marked a crisis in His ministry. Eight days later, 'He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray';[6] and a great glory shone from Him, and He was transfigured before them. At the Last Supper, He said to Peter, 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat, but I made supplication for *thee*, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.'[7] And when, during the night in which He was betrayed, He had finished His last great discourse to His disciples, 'lifting up His eyes to heaven,'[8] He prayed. The *spiritual* life of our Lord was human. Like ourselves, He was dependent on the Father, and He sought blessings for Himself and for others in prayer. Like ourselves, He was under the guidance of the

[1] Luke xxii. 43. [2] Luke v. 15, 16. [3] Luke vi. 12.
[4] Luke ix. 18. [5] Matt. xvi. 16; Luke ix. 20.
[6] Luke ix. 28. [7] Luke xxii. 32. [8] John xvii. 1.

Spirit of God; He was 'filled with the Spirit' when the hour came for the commencement of His public ministry; and it was in the power of the Spirit that He worked His miracles.[1]

The proof is complete. Christ was truly man. We have found in Him all the varieties and gradations of human susceptibilities, affections, and powers —rising range above range from the physical life by which human nature is related to the material world, till we have reached its highest summits where it touches heaven and finds God.

The foundations and the possibility of that act of infinite love by which the Eternal Son of God became flesh lie in the original greatness of the nature and destiny of man, who, according to the teaching of the Jewish Scriptures, was created by God in 'His own image.'[2] The greatness of the nature had been obscured by sin and the greatness of the destiny forfeited. The divine idea of humanity could not be fulfilled by a simple exertion of the divine omnipotence; it required the free concurrence of the race. We had sinned and might have despaired of ever reaching the glory to which God had destined us—the glory of righteousness, the glory of power, the glory of wisdom, the glory of blessedness, and the glory of perfect love. But it was God's eternal purpose that this glory should be achieved by Humanity.

[1] Matt. iii. 16, iv. 1; Luke iv. 1, 14; Matt. xii. 28; comp. Acts i. 2.
[2] Gen. i. 27.

His Eternal Son became man; and in Him, during His earthly humiliation, our nature reached its ideal ethical and spiritual perfection: in Him it has reached its ideal power and splendour in heaven. As He has shared our frailty, suffering, and conflict, we are to share His eternal triumph, glory, and blessedness.

The truth has been nobly expressed in the verses of my friend Mr. Gill:—

'O mean may seem this house of clay,
Yet 'twas the Lord's abode;
Our feet may mourn this thorny way,
Yet here Emmanuel trod.

This robe of flesh the Lord did wear;
This watch the Lord did keep;
These burdens sore the Lord did bear;
These tears the Lord did weep.

Our very frailty brings us near
Unto the Lord of Heaven;
To every grief, to every tear,
Such glory strange is given.

But not this fleshly robe alone
Shall link us, Lord, to Thee;
Not only in the tear and groan
Shall the dear kindred be.

Our own will be Thy Life Divine,
Thine image we shall bear;
With Thine own glory we shall shine,
In Thine own bliss shall share.

O mighty grace! our life to live,
To make our earth divine!
O mighty grace! Thy heaven to give,
And lift our life to Thine.'[1]

[1] *The Golden Chain of Praise*, by T. H. GILL. New edition, pp. 78-79. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

IV

THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (I.)

'*That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us.*'—1 JOHN i. 1-3.

IN the discourse on the Humanity of our Lord I reminded you that our belief in our Lord's Humanity rests on experience—chiefly on the experience of His earthly relatives, and of His apostles and friends: the experience of Mary His mother, and of His brothers, James and Jude; the experience of Salome, who, I suppose, was the sister of Mary and our Lord's aunt, and of her sons James and John, who were His cousins; the experience of Peter and Andrew and Thomas; of Mary and Martha and Lazarus of Bethany, and of other men and women who were the disciples of our Lord when He was on earth, the names of some of whom have been preserved, while the names of others have been lost. All these were among the original members of the Christian Church, and the

Christian Church, from the very first, believed that our Lord was really man.

In the four Gospels, which were received as a true account of Him by men who had known the apostles and the first generation of Christians, there are decisive proofs that He had a body like our own; that His intellect was subject to human limitations; that He had the susceptibilities, emotions, and affections of which we ourselves are conscious; that, like ourselves, He was assailed by temptation, had to make His choice between doing the Will of God and leaving it undone; that, like ourselves, He was dependent on the strength that God gave Him, and that He sought for this strength in prayer. When we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Eternal Son of God, these facts create great difficulties; but they are facts and we cannot annul them; they have the certain warrant of experience, and no speculation can dismiss them. We may construct what appear to be conclusive arguments to show that since the Lord Jesus Christ was a divine person He must have known all things, must have been inaccessible to temptation, could never have had occasion to pray; but He did not know all things, He was really tempted, He prayed often, and He sometimes spent whole nights in prayer to God. Our demonstrations of what *must have been* may seem irresistible; but when they are contradictory to what actually *was*—when they assail incontrovertible facts—they are like waves dashing against the rocks, and they break into foam.

We have, I say, the evidence of experience—the experience of those who knew our Lord during His earthly life—for the reality of His human nature; and the reality of His human nature has been confirmed by the experience of countless millions of Christian men and women to whom the Lord Jesus Christ—the Christ of the Gospels, risen and glorified—has been the Way to the Father. We have also the evidence of experience—the experience of the apostles and other original disciples of our Lord—for His divine glory. 'We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father;' 'That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us.'[1] This is the testimony of John, who was probably a cousin of our Lord, and may have known Him from His childhood; who was an apostle; and who, as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' shared our Lord's most intimate confidence, was with Him in all the great hours of His ministry, and stood near the cross when He was dying. He speaks for himself and for all his apostolic brethren. They were just as sure that 'the life, the Eternal life, which was with the

[1] John i. 14. 1 John i. 1-3.

Father' was 'manifested' in Him, as that He hungered, and thirsted, and was weary, felt anger and grief and sorrow, and was crucified by order of the Roman Governor of Judea. Their belief in His divine greatness was not a conclusion which they had reached by processes of speculation; they had 'beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father.' They knew, by experience, that He was divine, as they knew by experience that He was human. And here, too, the experience of the apostles and the earthly friends of our Lord, has been confirmed by the experience of Christian people, belonging to different races, living in different lands, speaking different tongues, cultivated and uncultivated, worshipping God with different rites, adherents of Churches separated from each other for many centuries by great controversies and fierce hostility. In these last days, our own faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour of men—however we may have first come by it—derives its life and vigour from our own knowledge of His power and glory. Experience, not mere authority,—experience, not mere theological demonstration—is the surest ground of our belief that He is the Son of the Eternal.

I.

There is nothing in the four Gospels to show that the great discovery of our Lord's divinity came to the apostles, or to any other of His earthly friends before His resurrection from the dead. Dr. Newman,

in a sermon preached at Oxford on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, in the early years of the Tractarian movement, speaks of our Lord's mother as having known, after she had received the message of the angel, that 'God was taking upon Him her flesh, and humbling Himself to be called her offspring';[1] but Mary could not have placed this interpretation on the angel's message. Her child was to be a child of wonder. He was to sit on the throne of His father David, and of His Kingdom there was to be no end. He was to inherit a greatness and blessedness transcending all that God had bestowed upon the patriarchs, prophets, kings and saints of the elect race. By His supernatural birth He would be separated from all the children of men, and stand in a near and mysterious relation to the Eternal. He would be 'holy;' He was to be called 'the Son of God,' and the 'Son of the Most High.' Through Him, the promises given to Abraham, whose fulfilment had been so long delayed, and the defeated hopes of many generations of patriots and saints were, at last, to be victoriously accomplished, and the righteous kingdom was to be established among men. But that God Himself was to become man in order to deliver Israel was a conception infinitely remote from the thoughts of the Jewish people; and the words of the angel, whatever they may mean to us, could not have conveyed it to the mind of Mary. In the song attributed to her by Luke there is nothing

[1] J. H. Newman, *Parochial Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 143.

to suggest that she had even the faintest glimpse of so awful a mystery. She exulted and triumphed in the belief that she was to be the mother of the Messiah; but neither she nor her people supposed that the Messiah was to be in any proper sense of the words a divine Person.[1] She would have been disabled for all the ministries which it was her blessedness and glory to render to her Child, had she believed that God had taken upon Him her flesh and humbled Himself to be called her offspring. How could she have required Him to obey her? How could she have presumed to caress Him? He could have had no mother in Mary, in Him Mary could have had no Son, had she known from the first that He was divine.

In Peter's great confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,'[2] there is evidence that the apostle had approached very near to the discovery of the truth. The confession was made at a critical time. Within seven or eight months our Lord's earthly ministry was to close. In Judea the hostility against Him had become fierce; and for some months He had not left Galilee: 'for He would not walk in Judea because the Jews sought to kill Him.'[3] And now in Galilee itself He was in danger. The immense enthusiasm which had been created by His miracles and His teaching was cooling down. 'Many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him'[4] after His hard saying

[1] Note H. [2] Matt. xvi. 16. [3] John vii. 1. [4] John vi. 66.

in the synagogue at Capernaum about the necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees, in order to break His power over the common people, had challenged Him to show them 'a sign from heaven'[1] that would be a final proof that he had been sent from God. They had pressed this demand upon Him earlier in His ministry, and He had refused to satisfy it;[2] and His refusal had no doubt shaken the confidence of some who had begun to believe that He was the Christ. Now they pressed it again; again He refused to meet it; and after His refusal He immediately left that part of the country, crossed the sea of Galilee, and landed near the town of Bethsaida,[3] which lies on the east bank of the Jordan. It looked as though He had sustained a fatal defeat, and as though even in Galilee He was unable to make good His claim to speak in the name of God.[4] From Bethsaida He went northward to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi. He and His disciples were now in a country chiefly inhabited by Gentiles—by heathen men; and it was there that, after prayer to God,[5] He determined to learn from those who had been living with Him for the

[1] Matt. xvi. 1-4; Mark viii. 11, 12.

[2] Matt. xii. 38-40; Luke xi. 16, 29.

[3] Mark viii. 22.

[4] His Galilean ministry was practically ended. He returned to Capernaum for a short time before His final journey to Jerusalem (Matt. xvii. 24-xviii. 35; Mark ix. 30-50), but it seems doubtful whether He resumed His public ministry there. Mark says (ix. 30) that as He 'passed through Galilee' on his way to Capernaum 'He would not that any man should know it.'

[5] Luke ix. 18.

previous two or three years what was the measure of their faith in Him. The buoyancy and boundless hope which had animated them twelve months earlier must have largely disappeared. Heavy clouds were gathering; great disasters might be at hand; did they stand firm in their loyalty? He asked them first what the *people* were thinking and saying about Him—'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' and they gave Him the most cheerful answer that they could—telling Him the opinions of those who still thought of Him as having been sent of God—'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' 'But who say *ye* that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'[1] They were great and noble words. They show that Peter had begun to see in Christ something of the 'glory' which he and the rest of the apostles knew afterwards to be the glory 'of the only begotten from the Father.' He had not discovered this 'glory' himself. Our Lord had declared that 'no one knoweth the Son, save the Father;'[2] and now that Peter had confessed that He was 'the Christ, the Son of the living God,' our Lord said to him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.'

The confession of Peter went beyond the acknowledgment that our Lord was the Christ; for

[1] Matt. xvi. 13-16. [2] Matt. xi. 27.

there is no evidence that the Jews of our Lord's time were accustomed to speak of the Christ as the Son of God.[1] But to Peter our Lord was not only God's Anointed, who was to fulfil the hopes of many generations, achieve for His people a great deliverance and set up the kingdom of God on earth; He stood in a nearer and more wonderful relation to God than other men; He knew God as no prophet or saint had ever known God before; He breathed a diviner air; He lived in a diviner world; He was nearer akin to the Eternal. How could Peter express his faith more clearly or more strongly than by saying, 'Thou art the Son of the living God?' He had caught sight of a great glory in His Lord, and knew that it was divine. His words are a sufficient expression of our own faith in our Lord's true divinity

But Peter's confession could not have meant for him all that it means for us. He had not yet come to see that in Jesus of Nazareth the Eternal Word had become flesh—the Eternal Word who was 'with God' and who 'was God,' by whom 'all things were made,' and 'without whom was not anything made that hath been made.' If either Peter or any other of the apostles had discovered at this time that our Lord was a divine Person who had existed from eternity, and through whom the heavens and the earth had been created, we should have found some strong and vivid traces of the discovery in the story of their subsequent intercourse with Him; but we find none.

[1] See Note I.

Within a very short time after the great confession had been made, our Lord began to speak to His disciples of His approaching sufferings and death; and Peter, we are told, took Him aside to speak to Him privately, and 'began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall never be unto Thee. But our Lord turned,' would not go with him, stopped him as soon as he began to remonstrate, rebuked him sharply in the presence of the other disciples, and said to him, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan: . . . thou mindest not the things of God but the things of men.'[1] Is it conceivable that Peter could have been guilty of this presumption if he had already known the stupendous truth which he learnt afterwards; that the Lord Jesus Christ was, in the highest and most august sense of the words, a divine Person—that he was God?

II.

The discovery came at last. It came after our Lord had risen from the dead, but before He returned to the Father. At His first appearance to His assembled disciples, on the evening of the day on which He rose, they seem to have been too deeply agitated to see clearly the great glory into which He had passed. Since the early morning they had been excited by reports of the empty tomb, the vision of angels, His appearance to Peter, His appearance to Mary Magdalene; and, when they met in the evening, the two

[1] Matt. xvi. 21-23; Mark viii. 31-33.

disciples, who had been to Emmaus, came in and said that they too had seen the Lord; that 'He was known of them in the breaking of the bread'; but that as soon as they knew Him 'He vanished out of their sight.' And while their hearts were filled with joy and hope and wonder and fear—for was it possible that it could all be true?—they saw Jesus standing among them. Then their excitement passed into terror: 'they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit.' How natural all the story is! To calm them, our Lord said, 'Peace be unto you'; and they recognised His voice. He reasoned with them and showed them His hands and His feet and His side—His side which had been pierced by the soldier's spear. 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'[1]

Their desolation had given place to a great joy; but the tumult of their delight prevented them from perceiving at once the new revelation of the transcendent glory of their Lord which had now been given them. During the week they meditated on what they had seen and heard on that wonderful evening. They talked to each other about it. They recovered their calmness; and as their excitement sank they came to see that Christ was greater than they had ever supposed Him to be during His earthly life. Seven days passed, and He appeared to them again and then they confessed that He was God. The confession did not come from the lips from which we

[1] Luke xxiv. 1-43; John xx. 1-23.

might have expected it—from Peter, from John, from James—but from Thomas. 'Reach hither thy finger,' said our Lord to the apostle who had doubted whether He had really risen; 'and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into My side, and be not faithless but believing.' Thomas answered and said unto Him: '*My Lord*, and *my God*.' That was a far greater confession than Peter's. Our Lord accepted it. 'Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'[1] The confession of Thomas was the confession of all the apostles. Henceforth Jesus of Nazareth was their Lord and their God.

The mystery of His life was now revealed. He had been so near to them and yet so far away; so humble and yet so majestic; so gentle and yet so authoritative. There had been an unearthly sanctity about Him. He had loved them well, and yet He had always stood apart from them. All the unique and inexplicable impressions which had been made upon them by our Lord's character and teaching and miracles and claims now returned to them and received their interpretation. His earthly life was transfigured by the light of His resurrection. They had been living with One who, in the highest sense that the words would bear, was the Son of the Eternal. Having seen Christ, they had seen the Father. He was their Lord and their God.

[1] John xx. 26-29.

III.

The great truth had now taken possession of the thought and life of the apostles, and through them it passed into the thought and life of those who received the Christian Gospel. Not that the apostles began their preaching by declaring either to Jews or Gentiles the mystery and glory of our Lord's person. They told the story of 'the mighty works and wonders and signs,' which bore witness that the power of God was with Him during His earthly ministry; and the story of His crucifixion, and of His resurrection from the dead. They declared that He had died for the sins of men, and that now, by the authority of the Eternal, He had been made the Prince and the Saviour of all nations. In the name of Christ they entreated all men to repent, and in His name they offered to all men the remission of sins. They declared that the day was coming when He would return in great glory to judge the world in righteousness, and that then He would render to every man according to his works; would receive into eternal blessedness all who had trusted in His mercy and kept His commandments, and punish evil-doers with eternal destruction. This was the substance of their public preaching.[1] To those who were drawn to Christ they doubtless gave fuller instruction concerning the glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world; but every man that had trusted in Christ for

[1] Note K.

the remission of sins and for power to live a righteous life, every man that acknowledged that He was the Lord of conduct, and that looked forward with devout awe to standing before His judgment-seat to give account of the deeds done in the body, had already implicitly acknowledged that He was divine.

Hence, in the apostolic epistles to Christian Churches, while there are elaborate arguments in support of contested truths, the divinity of our Lord is everywhere taken for granted. The texts in which it is definitely asserted are the least conclusive and impressive proofs that the apostles themselves and the Churches believed that He was one with God. Such texts are but like the sparkling crystals which appear on the sand after the tide has retreated; these are not the strongest—though they may be the most apparent—proofs that the sea is salt: the salt is present in solution in every bucket of sea-water. And so the truth of our Lord's divinity is present in solution in whole pages of the epistles, from which not a single text could be quoted that explicitly declares it. It is present in the passionate and unmeasured love and devotion with which the apostles regard our Lord; it is present in their exulting faith in Him; it is present in their profound belief that the very springs of their higher life are in Christ, and that only as they are one with Christ can they hope for righteousness in this world or for glory in the next. They assume throughout that, in the thought and life of the Churches to which they are writing, the Lord Jesus Christ holds the same great

place as in their own. They appeal to His original greatness and glory, as to a truth which the Churches acknowledge, to add pathos and force to precepts of Christian duty. When Paul is charging the Christian Gentiles in Corinth to contribute liberally to the relief of the poor Jewish Christians in Judea, he recalls to them the descent of the Son of God from His eternal blessedness in heaven to the sufferings of His earthly life: 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.'[1] When he is exhorting the Christians at Philippi to unselfishness, and charging every one of them to look not to his own things, but also to the things of others, Paul adds: 'Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God counted it not a prize'—a thing to be grasped—'to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.'[2] Faith in the divinity of our Lord was rooted in the very life of the apostolic Churches.

IV.

Early in the second century—about A.D. 112—the younger Pliny, governor of Bithynia, in the famous letter in which he consults Trajan as to the manner

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [2] Phil. ii. 5-8.

in which he should deal with the charges brought against the Christians, who were very numerous in his province, reports that it was the custom of the adherents of this new superstition to meet together on a certain day before sunrise 'and to sing hymns to Christ as to a god.'[1] And throughout the world, wherever Christian Churches were founded, they acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and worshipped Him. They were baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They met for worship on the first day of the week, because on the first day of the week the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead. The Lord's Supper, which is at once the commemoration of His death and the visible symbol of perpetual communion with Him was the centre and crown of their acts of religious service.

We are told by a writer living towards the close of the second century that 'many psalms and hymns, written by the faithful brethren from the beginning, celebrate Christ the Word of God, speaking of Him as divine.'[2] Irenæus, writing about A.D. 180, says:—

'The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world . . . believes in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation . . . The Church having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole

[1] Pliny's *Letters*, xcvi. (xcvii.)

[2] A quotation from a writer against the heresy of Artemon.—EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Ecc.* v. 28.

world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. . . . For although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world'—by which he appears to mean the churches in Palestine. 'But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.'[1]

V.

But while to Christian faith and experience the divinity of our Lord was a glorious reality, it was an insoluble problem to speculation. That man is near akin to the Eternal God—which is one of the transcendent truths revealed in the Incarnation—was inconceivable to philosophers who had constructed a conception of the Absolute, the Infinite, the Eternal, by the processes of abstract reasoning. Gnosticism, a great intellectual movement of the early centuries, which, if it had been successful in its conflict with the historic faith of the Church, would have changed the Christian Gospel into a speculative system, in which many of the principles and tendencies of Grecian philosophy were incoherently blended with the wildest and most audacious fancies of the Oriental imagination, was willing to acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ was far more than man, but

[1] Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, I. x.

peremptorily—and on the ground of its essential and fundamental principles—denied that in the supreme sense of the word He was divine. He may have been an emanation from God, or an emanation from an emanation; but between Him and the Eternal the distance was immeasurable.

Gnosticism was, however, too largely pagan in its spirit and origin to exert permanently any powerful and direct influence on the formation of Christian doctrine. The real danger came from Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria in the early years of the fourth century, who maintained that our Lord was the first and greatest of the creations of God, and that through Him God created the Heavens and the Earth; that He is so near to God that to us in our low estate He may appear to share the divine splendours and to be one with the Supreme; but that He is not the Eternal Son of the Eternal. According to Arius He was the voluntary creation of the divine power; He was created out of nothing, and had no part in the substance of the divine life; before His creation He was not; at His creation He began to be. The controversy shook the Eastern Church to its foundations. The theory of Arius seemed to offer a plausible explanation both of the greatness of our Lord and of His subordination to the Father. It was condemned by the Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325), and Arius and the bishops who refused to sign the new Confession were banished to Illyria.

But some of the most distinguished members of the

Council had consented with reluctance to the technical terms which had been introduced into the creed in order to make the condemnation of the Arian heresy absolutely unambiguous, and they had yielded at last under the strong constraint of the influence of Constantine, whose great concern was to restore peace to the Church. Hardly had the Council broken up when there set in a great reaction. For a few years the Arians and the Semi-Arians enjoyed, under the successors of Constantine, imperial favour, and in every part of the East triumphed over the adherents of Athanasius. But their triumph was short. It was of the very substance of the Christian Gospel that, in Christ, heaven and earth, God and man, had been brought together; and if Christ was only a creature, no matter how glorious, God was still at an infinite distance from our race. It was the fundamental assumption of Arianism that the Infinite and Eternal God *could* not come near to men; but the Church knew, for itself, that He had come near; it had seen in Christ the glory of God, and had found God in Him. In the strength of its own consciousness of restoration to God in the power of the Christian redemption it flung off the Arian heresy.

The creed of Nicæa, with the additions and modifications accepted and approved by the Council of Chalcedon a hundred and twenty-five years later (A.D. 451), became the rule of faith throughout the whole of the Christian Church. And this morning, Christian congregations assembled in the depths of

Asia and on the Pacific slopes of America—in the heart of Europe and on the shores of the Mediterranean, the Baltic and the North Sea—in Africa, in Australia, in India—congregations in communion with Rome, congregations in communion with Constantinople—Lutherans and Anglicans—congregations of a hundred different races—have united to confess the glory of Christ in the majestic words of the Nicene Creed:—

'I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.'[1]

And this is our faith; we, too, with countless millions of the redeemed of all ages and of all lands, acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is 'God of

[1] Note L.

God, Light of Light, very God of very God:' 'Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ, Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.'

VI.

Gnosticism, Arianism—how remote they are from all modern forms of religious speculation; and how inconceivable it is that they could ever have given satisfaction to the human reason in its perpetual search for a true conception of the relation of God to the human race and the physical universe! But they represented the philosophical and—to use the fashionable term—the 'advanced' thought of the early Christian centuries; and they were the result of intellectual and spiritual tendencies which have appeared and re-appeared time after time in the history of the Christian Church. Indeed, within the memory of living men Arianism had its adherents in this country, in this city; and, for anything I know, some may still survive. This church is the monument and memorial of the faith of our fathers in the true divinity of our Lord, and an enduring protest against the Arian theology. The Nonconformists of Birmingham who, in 1689, immediately after the passing of the Act of Toleration, built the Old Meeting, held the creed of the Puritans; and their first ministers were what we should call evangelical and orthodox. But during the early part of the eighteenth century Arianism spread widely, both in the Established Church and among

the Dissenters; and in the year 1746, the Old Meeting congregation elected an Arian minister. In 1747 most, if not all, of the members of the congregation who held fast to the belief that the Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly the Eternal Word and Son of God, seceded and formed an Independent Church; they erected a meeting-house in Carr's Lane, which was opened for public worship in 1748.

The explanation, as it seems to me, of the Arianism of the eighteenth century, as well as of the Arianism and Gnosticism of the second, third, and fourth centuries, is to be found in the fact that Christian theologians had practically constructed their conception of God without taking into account the revelation of God which had been given in Christ. The early part of the eighteenth century was a time when immense importance was attached to what is called Natural Theology. In their controversy with unbelief, some of the defenders of the Christian Faith appeared to be anxious to show that the chief purpose for which our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, was merely to give greater clearness and authoritative confirmation to truths which were already discoverable in the order of the world. Others, with a juster, but still inadequate conception of the greatness of the Christian revelation, acknowledged the immeasurable value of the Christian Gospel as revealing the infinite mercy of God, and the greatness of the redemption which God had achieved for our race; but they built up

their structure of Christian doctrine on the foundation of a conception of God and of His relations to the Universe, which had been furnished by philosophy. Their God was the God of the Theist, though their doctrine of Christ and of human redemption was Christian. The foundation could not long support the superstructure. Sooner or later they were compelled either to re-construct their conception of God, or to abandon their faith in the Christian Gospel.

We find God in the physical universe; but the physical universe, to use the striking words of Dr. Martineau 'is not God's characteristic sphere of *self-expression.* Rather is it His eternal act of *self-limitation*; of abstinence from the movements of free affection, moment by moment, for the sake of a constancy that shall never falter or deceive.'[1] When in other regions of the divine activity we have come to know God in His righteousness and His care for human perfection, we may see that the inflexible order of the physical universe is not only a stimulus to human intelligence, but a discipline of the moral and spiritual life. But the physical universe itself, while it reveals God in the immensity of His intellectual resources, in the awfulness of His power, in His delight in beauty, and, under some of its aspects, in His kindness and bounty, does not reveal Him in His righteousness. If this were the only revelation of Him, we could not tell whether He was just or

[1] Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (London: Longmans, 1891), p. 36.

unjust, compassionate or pitiless; whether He had any delight in goodness, any abhorrence of selfishness, falsehood, treachery, cruelty; or, whether He regarded the vices and the virtues of men with indifference.

It is only when we pass from the physical order of the universe to the moral order of human life,—it is only when conscience rises into activity and is confronted by the majesty and authority of Moral Law—it is only then that we discover that the Supreme, the Eternal, is irrevocably on the side of righteousness; that if we do well we may hope for His approval, and that if we do ill we provoke His condemnation and His wrath. This new discovery transfigures all that we had learnt of Him from the visible universe. It creates perplexities and difficulties; for the confusions and disorders of human life, the miseries which come upon good men, the happiness and prosperity of bad men, and the suffering which the ill-doing of the wicked entails upon the innocent, seem inconsistent with God's righteousness; but we hold fast our faith, and believe steadfastly that justice and judgment are the foundations of His throne.

The philosophical theist, working on these materials, constructs a great conception of God. God is from everlasting to everlasting; He is present in all worlds; His power and His wisdom are infinite. He is perfectly just. He is what He is, by the eternal necessities of His being. He is infinitely removed

from all experience of the infirmities and sorrows of human life. Men see His glory from afar and bow before Him with wonder and awe. But if the theist is asked to believe that God became man, and, as man, endured hunger and thirst and pain, and submitted to intellectual limitations and was tempted to sin, he answers that this is incredible—that it is wholly inconsistent with his conception of the infinite, the eternal, the unchangeable God. Of all men, the philosophical theist, satisfied with his theory of the transcendent greatness of the Creator of all things, is least disposed to receive the Christian Gospel.

But can he be sure that by his search and speculation he has really found out God—that he has found out the Almighty 'unto perfection'?[1] Can he be certain that his theory includes all the possibilities of that infinite life—all the perfections of that infinite glory? Is it either self-evident or demonstrable that God has nothing more to reveal of Himself—that he, God's creature, has nothing more to learn?

Suppose that in forming his conception of God he had been so impressed by the immensity of the material universe, by its grandeur and beauty, and by its fixed and unchangeable order, that he had constructed his final conception of God without taking into account the moral order of human life and the awful obligations of duty—would not his conception have been fatally defective? Suppose that

[1] Job x. 7.

having been unable to discover in the phenomena and laws of the material universe any proof that God is on the side of righteousness, he had refused to listen to the testimony of conscience to the moral perfection and moral authority of the Supreme—would not his conception of God have missed what he himself regards as God's crowning glory? The discovery of God's moral perfection is a new, a wonderful, a surprising revelation, of which there had been no clear premonition in what the material universe had revealed of His wisdom, His power, His absolute supremacy, and His eternal being. And how can the philosophical theist be certain that further discoveries of God are impossible—discoveries equally new, equally wonderful, equally surprising?

It is the Christian contention that these discoveries have been actually made in Christ. To refuse to consider His claims because they are excluded by a conception of God which has been formed by a philosophical treatment of the phenomena of the material universe and the moral life of man, is as unreasonable as to refuse to consider the witness to God in the moral life of man, because God's moral perfections have no place in a conception of God formed by a philosophical treatment of the phenomena of the material universe. The Christian Gospel claims authority to reconstruct and infinitely enrich man's conception of the Eternal. It is a new revelation: it does not merely confirm the old.

V

THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (II.)

'*That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life* (*and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us*) *; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us.*'—1 John i. 1-3.

THERE are large numbers of Christian people who have had a clear and firm faith in the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ ever since they began to think with any seriousness on Christian duty and on the greatness of the Christian redemption. How they came by their faith they may be unable to tell; but, from the first, they have been as sure that the Lord Jesus Christ was God as that He was man. They have found in Him the very glory of the Father. Indeed, to most of the Christian people whom I knew in my early days, I think that the divinity of our Lord was more real than His humanity; to them it was not a mere doctrine, but a wonderful and glorious fact which ruled and penetrated all their religious life.

But during the last thirty or forty years there has been a great change. Many causes have contributed to create a new and deeper interest in the earthly history of our Lord. There has been a strenuous effort to make real to thought and to the imagination the Jesus of the Gospels with His physical and intellectual limitations—to know Him as Mary and Martha and Lazarus knew Him, as Peter and James and John knew Him, before He 'was declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection of the dead';[1] —to know Him in His relations to Pharisees and Sadducees and Scribes, to publicans and harlots and the crowds of the common people who were attracted by His miracles and the charm of His teaching. It seems, indeed, to be the impression of some that they have gained a great deal when they have learned how He was dressed and what kind of houses He lived in; when they have made to themselves a satisfactory picture of Nazareth as He knew it in His childhood and youth, and of the hills which lie round it; when the scenery of the Lake of Genesareth has become as vivid to their imagination as the scenery of Windermere, and the snows of Hermon as the snows of the Alps. That in some sense He was divine they *believe*; that He was human they *know*. Of His divinity their thoughts are indefinite and vague; it hangs like a bright but uncertain cloud over the solid facts of His earthly history which have fascinated and charmed them, provoked their curi-

[1] Rom. i. 4.

osity, and kindled their enthusiasm. This exclusive interest in the human experiences of our Lord and in the circumstances and conditions of His earthly ministry may be among the incidental results of that 'return to Christ' which an eminent theologian and dear friend of mine[1] believes to have been the most conspicuous characteristic of the Christian thought of the last fifty years; but he would agree with me in saying, that the real wonder and power of our Lord's earthly life remain unknown until His divinity becomes as real to us as His humanity, and we see in Him the glory of the Eternal. The 'return to Christ' does not mean a 'return' to the kind of knowledge which men had of Him while they were listening to the Sermon on the Mount, or the parable of the Prodigal Son, or while they were witnessing His gracious miracles. Even the apostles did not 'know' Him until His earthly life had been transfigured and interpreted by His resurrection from the dead;[2] and then Thomas, expressing the faith of his brethren as well as his own, exclaimed, 'My Lord, and my God.' Their previous experience had prepared them for the great discovery of who He really was, but it was not till now that the great glory broke upon them.

Perhaps I may be able to render service to many of you, if I give some account of the way in

[1] Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield, in *Christ and Modern Theology*. Hodder and Stoughton, 1893.

[2] 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip?'—John xiv. 9.

which, as it seems to me, the faith of the Church in the divinity of our Lord is renewed from age to age. It does not rest merely upon authority—whether the authority of councils or of the original apostles. Under the illumination of the Holy Spirit and as the result of the experiences of the Christian life, Christian men in one generation after another see for themselves the glory of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I

We read the four Gospels. We know that they were received as trustworthy and authoritative by Christian Churches at the close of the first century, when, in every part of the world, large numbers of Christian people were still living who had heard the story of our Lord's life and teaching and wonderful works, the story of His death and of His resurrection,[1] from the original apostles, and from others who had known Him during His earthly ministry. Whether we read Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, we receive the same strangely complex impression. About the reality of our Lord's humanity there can be no doubt. His body was no phantom; He grew from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood; He suffered weariness and pain; at last He was nailed to the cross, and buried in Joseph's new tomb. His intellect was subject to human limitations. He felt the same

[1] See Lectures v.-xiv. on *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

emotions that we feel—surprise, anger, fear, indignation, joy. He had His human friendships. He was tempted and He prayed. He was deeply moved by all forms of human suffering. And yet He is not as other men. This, I say, is the impression which we receive from the representation of our Lord in the four Gospels.

Nor is it merely from His contemporaries that He is separated; while we read we are conscious that He is separated from ourselves. The story of no other life—whether the life of hero, saint, reformer, or prophet, impresses us in the same way. Moses, Elijah, Paul, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Wesley—they reached heights of power that we cannot reach, but they do not impress us as belonging to an order of life different from our own. Christ does impress us in that way. He speaks our common human language, but with an accent of His own. He has a regal manner which appears to be native to Him, and which the humble conditions of His life cannot conceal. How this impression of the distance which separates Him from us is produced we may be unable to tell; but we are conscious of it; and it is deepened, year after year, as we become more familiar with the contents of the Gospels. He stands apart from other men and above them.

(I.) When we begin to reflect we may see that the impression is produced in part by His freedom from the consciousness of sin. There is not the faintest trace in the four Gospels of His ever having been

troubled by moral or spiritual failure. He is not pursuing a perfection which retreats as He approaches it. He is always equal to the duty of the hour; He does it naturally, and, except in the supreme agony of Gethsemane, with ease and spontaneity. He says frankly—speaking of the Father—'I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.'[1] To feel the full force of these words it is necessary to remember how penetrating and searching was His conception of righteousness; how impatient He was of mere conformity to an external law; with what earnestness He insisted on purity of thought and heart; with what rigour He demanded not merely freedom from sin but a positive, active, and vigorous righteousness, springing from perfect love both for God and for man. It is also necessary to remember how sternly he warned men against all moral and religious illusions—against the danger of supposing that they were righteous when they were not; and the severity with which He condemned the self-confidence of the Pharisees. This was the Teacher who declared that He pleased God perfectly, always and in all things; and we feel, while we are reading His story, that He had a right to say it.

The impression of some mysterious difference between our Lord and other men is strengthened by the fact that His prayers are solitary prayers. He was a great religious Teacher; He insisted on the duty and blessedness of praying; He attributed

[1] John viii. 22.

exceptional grace and power to the prayers of those who 'are gathered together in His name.'[1] But He Himself never 'gathered together' His disciples that He and they might pray together. He sometimes prayed in their presence, and prayed *for* them; but he never prayed *with* them. He stood apart. His relations to God were not theirs. They could not speak to God as He spoke. 'Father, that which Thou hast given Me I *will*, that where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me;'[2]—this is not the manner in which mortal men, even though they are saints, may venture to address the Eternal; it explains why it was that when our Lord prayed He prayed alone.

Consider, too, the kind of knowledge that He must have had of God. He knew God as other men know the face of the earth and of the sky. It does not surprise Him that He should have this knowledge. It has not come to Him as the result of laborious effort or of occasional revelations. There is a wonderful spaciousness in it; there is room for the freest movement of thought; to whatever human limitations His knowledge of God may have been subjected, there is nothing to suggest that what was hidden from Him lessened the value, or even the completeness, of what He knew; or that he was ever uncertain of His ground; or that there were any awful problems in the divine government of the world

[1] Matt. xviii. 19-20. [2] John xvii. 29.

which perplexed and troubled Him. He knows all that He wants to know. In all these respects, our Lord stands apart. He is not as other men.

(II.) How far He stands apart from other men—how far He stands above them—we begin to discover when we consider the personal authority which He assumed over the moral and religious life of men. And yet to say that He *assumed* this authority is hardly accurate. It was native to Him. He could not speak without implying it.

I read Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, and am conscious of breathing a wholesome and invigorating moral atmosphere; they give me a clearer apprehension of the law of moral perfection; they strengthen my desire to obey it; but that law is as far above the greatest of moralists as it is above me. I read the writings of Jewish prophets and of Christian apostles; a divine word has come to them which rebukes me, humbles me, consoles me, fills me with hope and with joy; but while I read I am conscious that prophets and apostles are but the ministers and interpreters of the mind of God. They themselves tell me that they are men of 'unclean lips,' that they bring me divine treasure 'in earthen vessels,' that they are men of 'like passions' with the rest of mankind. They are nearer to God than I am, as the mountain summits are nearer to the stars than the valleys which lie at their feet, but the distance between them and the Eternal, as well as between myself and the Eternal, is infinite. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks in altogether a different

manner. For example:—He quotes the ancient Commandments which God had given to the Jewish people at Sinai, and which lay at the very foundation of their religious and national life:—'Thou shalt not kill;' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery';—and of His own authority He gives to the people far more searching laws. He does not argue that the old Commandment which forbids murder forbids in principle all unjustifiable anger; or that the old Commandment which forbids adultery is likely to be broken if a man indulges in impurity of thought and desire. Nor does He appeal to the authority of God who gave the old laws to sanction the new. He is speaking to people who perfectly believed the story of the storm-clouds which hung about the desert mountain, and the blackness, the darkness, and the tempest, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the descent of the Lord in fire, and the awful voice which proclaimed the law, 'which voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them;' and He sets His own laws by the side of the laws of Sinai: 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you'—*I*—'that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.' 'Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adul-

tery: but I say unto you'—*I*—'that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.'[1]

These are but illustrations of His habitual manner, whether he is addressing great crowds of men or His own elect disciples. He does not give counsels, but laws. He does not merely teach; He commands. He speaks with authority.

And the wonder is that, not merely during His earthly ministry but in every succeeding generation, His authority has been acknowledged. If men were closely and persistently examined as to the reasons which lead them to acknowledge it, we should, I think, discover that they have found in Christ a certain majesty to which they are compelled to submit. They submit because they have no choice. Whatever other explanation they may offer we should find that this is the true one. We *perceive*—without reasoning—that one man is mean and base, another chivalrous and generous; that one man is to be honoured and another to be pitied; that on one man we may lean for support, and that we must be willing that another should lean for support on us; and so, we *perceive*—without reasoning—that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Moral Ruler. He is a kind of objective conscience. We recognise in Him—we cannot tell how—the Lord of our moral and religious life. I do not mean that every isolated precept of His comes to us with authority; but that He Himself has this

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22, 27.

authority; and that His precepts, as a whole, have this authority. We may begin by receiving His commandments one by one, because our own conscience recognises the obligation of the duties which they impose; but this is only a transient stage of Christian experience; it is a mere preparation for the experience that is truly Christian. As the result of growing familiarity with our Lord, conscience becomes surer of Him than of itself; finds in His will the same awful obligation that it finds in the law of Duty; His will, *because it is His*, whenever we are certain that we know it, is supreme. It is not because we first believe that He is divine that we acknowledge His authority over our moral and religious life; it would be truer to say that in discovering His authority we discover that He is divine. Only God can have the power over life which He asserts, and to which we find ourselves obliged to submit.

We Christian people can no more doubt the authority of Christ than we can doubt the authority of Conscience. The soul recognises its Master and Lord when once it really sees Him. The sheep belonging to the flock of the Good Shepherd 'know His voice,' and they 'follow Him.'[1] Age after age, in land after land, He leads them in 'paths of righteousness for His name's sake.' They pass from height to height, and still He leads them. Their conception of the perfect life is expanded, elevated, enriched, deepened, and their power to live it is

[1] John x. 4.

augmented, the more closely they follow Him. In receiving Him—not merely as a great and divinely inspired teacher from whom they are to learn how to live, nor merely as a great example,—but as the real Lord of conduct, they actually achieve righteousness. In obeying Him they consciously rise into the freedom of the sons of God. This is a proof from life, that belief in His authority is no illusion; the belief is confirmed by a varied and indubitable experience.[1]

(III.) The Lord Jesus Christ, I say, is the Lord of conduct. For His disciples and for all men, in all countries and in all ages, His will is the final authority from which there is no appeal; He is supreme over the whole moral and religious life of man. But He also assumes that He has power to save men both from sin itself and from the worst consequences of sin. Other men need this salvation; He does not. He has come into the world to save it. In His teaching there are very definite though mysterious indications that through Him, and especially through His death, men are to be redeemed and to receive the forgiveness of sins. Of the mystery of His death, it was obviously unlikely that He would say much before He actually died; but while this truth naturally holds a larger place in the apostolic epistles than in our Lord's own teaching, He declared, again and again, that He had come to save men by dying for them: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

[1] Note M.

even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life.'[1] 'The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep. . . . No one taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.'[2] 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'[3] He had come 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.'[4] In the night in which He was betrayed, He instituted a solemn service in which His disciples were to commemorate Him until He returned to the world in glory; and in this service He definitely connected His death with the remission of sins:—'He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins.'[5] After His resurrection the apostles learnt from our Lord Himself that 'repentance and remission of sins' were to 'be preached *in His name* unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'[6]

It is clear that our Lord did not regard Himself as being nothing more than a prophet, who had received wonderful disclosures of the infinite compassion and mercy of God, and whose joy and honour it was to make this compassion and mercy known to mankind. He believed and He taught that it was through Him that the divine mercy actually achieved human re-

[1] John iii. 14. [2] John x. 11, 18. [3] John xv. 13.
[4] Matt. xx. 28. [5] Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. [6] Luke xxiv. 47.

demption. It was by the giving of His life that men were to be ransomed; it was through the shedding of His blood that they were to receive the remission of sins. It is to Him—and not only to the Father—that we are to give thanks for the mercy which 'as far as the east is from the west' removes our transgressions from us.

All this is contained in our Lord's own account of His relation to the redemption of the world; and all this has been confirmed in the experience of sixty generations of men. The story of the Pilgrim whose burden fell from his shoulders when he saw the cross, is the story of countless millions of men; it is, thank God, the story of many to whom I am speaking this morning. You had been oppressed by the sense of your guilt, and you could find no relief in your sorrow for sin or in your endeavour to do better. You had been wayward, wilful, selfish, arrogant, sensual; your own hearts condemned you, and you knew that God condemned you. A dark, heavy shadow fell upon life, and made it cold and cheerless. You appealed to Christ, believing that in Him God Himself had in some wonderful way become a sacrifice for the sins of men, and the shadow was broken; gradually or swiftly the darkness passed away; you stood in the light of God. 'Nothing'—to quote words which I have used elsewhere—'is more intensely real than the sense of guilt: it is as real as the eternal distinction between right and wrong in which it is rooted. And nothing is more intensely

real than the sense of release from guilt which comes from the discovery and assurance of the remission of sins. The evil things which a man has done cannot be undone; but when they have been forgiven through Christ, the iron chain which so bound him to them, as to make the guilt of them eternally his, has been broken; before God and his own conscience he is no longer guilty of them.'[1]

Who can this be through whom the sins of the race are forgiven, through whose death we ourselves have received the forgiveness of sins? We know that He is man; but surely He is more than man. Who is He? To Him all the saved of all generations owe their eternal salvation. Who is He? Who? If you shrink from calling Him God, what other title adequate to the greatness of His work will you attribute to Him?

(IV.) There is one other claim of our Lord's which has been verified in the experience of men, and which also implies His divine greatness. Throughout His ministry He was constantly declaring that He had come to give 'Life' to men, 'Eternal Life.' To say that He meant nothing more than that His teaching, by giving men a truer and deeper knowledge of God and of the will of God concerning conduct, liberates them from sin and 'death,' and raises them to a life in fellowship with the Eternal, is to do the rudest violence to His words. The Christian

[1] *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, pp. 14, 15. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Apostles might have claimed to be, in this sense, the givers of 'Life,' of 'Eternal Life,' to those who received their teaching. But it is a claim that they never make; we may be sure that they felt that it would be an act of spiritual arrogance and of blasphemous presumption to make it. Our Lord attributes, no doubt, great power to His 'Word,' and it is through His 'Word'—not apart from it—that He works the regeneration of men.[1] But it is, I think, hardly possible to resist the impression that in the giving and maintenance of 'Life,' He ascribes to Himself a personal activity of a wholly different kind from that which He exerted in the teaching of truth. For example—'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me; and I give unto them Eternal Life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, which hath given them unto Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one.'[2] Again in His great prayer: 'Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given Him,

[1] And, therefore, when even His disciples were perplexed because He had spoken of men eating His 'Flesh' and drinking His 'Blood' that they might have eternal life, He told them that mere 'flesh' and 'blood' was not the channel through which He imparted to men the transcendent gift, but that His 'words' were 'spirit' and 'life.'—John vi. 63.

[2] John x. 27-29.

to them He should give Eternal Life.'[1] Again, in His great discourse to His disciples: 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing.'[2] 'If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you.'[3] In passages like these He claims a power which no mere 'teacher sent from God,' however glorious the truth he may have to impart, can ever claim; and He declares the existence of a relation between Himself and His disciples of a kind wholly different from that which can exist between a teacher and those who receive His instruction. The gift of life is represented as His personal gift—not as the mere effect of the truth which He reveals; for its permanence it is necessary —not only that His 'words' should 'abide' in His disciples—but that His disciples should 'abide' in Him; as the Father keeps, so He keeps, all that hear His voice and follow Him, and through that keeping they are safe from perdition.

These claims have been confirmed in the history and experience of Christian men. A new and diviner type of life has appeared in those who have trusted in Christ, reaching its consummate perfection in elect saints, but also manifesting something of its power and graciousness in the commonalty of the Church. Of the reality of this life, millions of Christian people have been assured. They were

[1] John xvii. 1, 2. [2] John xv. 5. [3] John xv. 7.

conscious of their kinship with those who shared it; their hearts went out to every man in whom they saw the signs of its presence; they knew that they were mysteriously one with all that had received the Christian redemption; were bound to them—not by the accidental ties which unite those who merely belong to the same party or share the same beliefs—but by the community of life which unites those who have sprung from the same stock and are members of the same family, the same race. The spontaneity of a natural instinct was revealed in their affection for all Christians; Paul might have said to them, as he said to the Thessalonians, 'Concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.'[1] They were sure that they had 'passed out of death into life,' because they loved the 'brethren.'[2] In the power of that life they were consciously related to an invisible and eternal kingdom as, in the power of their physical life, they were related to the visible and material universe. The diviner realms into which they had passed had a permanent, if not unbroken, ascendency over their thought, their affection, and their will. The heavens were always above them, even if the splendours were sometimes concealed by clouds. They knew God for themselves, and the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory; their deepest joys had their springs in worlds unseen; their best treasure was no longer on earth;

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 9. [2] 1 John iii. 14.

the laws they endeavoured to obey were the laws of the kingdom of God.

To those who have received this life its Giver and Source is never doubtful. It comes to them from Christ; it is the gift of His grace; as they trusted Him to bestow it they trust Him to sustain it. But He who gives and sustains a divine life must be Himself divine.

It has been said that 'a religious creed is definable as a theory of original causation,' and that the existence of God is 'an hypothesis which is supposed to render the Universe comprehensible.'[1] This may be a true account of the creed and the God of philosophical *speculation*; it is infinitely far from being a true account either of the creed or the God of *religion*. The man who is agitated with wonder and fear because he is beginning to discover that behind the awful contrasts of Right and Wrong there is a Living Person, and who is endeavouring to learn whether this discovery is absolutely trustworthy, is not trying to construct a satisfactory 'theory of original causation;' he wants to be sure whether, here and now, he is in the presence of One whose will is the law of conduct; a law which must be obeyed at the cost of all things. The man who is humiliated and scourged by conscience for his sins has no anxiety about an 'hypothesis' which will 'render the uni-

[1] Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (third edition), p. 43. London: Williams and Norgate.

verse comprehensible;' he is passionately asking whether he is environed by nothing but a system of rigid and eternal law, or whether there is One who can forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin, can liberate him from the sense of guilt and give him peace. The man to whom has come the fair vision of a moral and spiritual perfection which he is unable to achieve, who is distressed because, in the agitations and excitements of the world or in its monotonous dreariness, he forgets God and falls away from his better purposes—who has learnt that he shares the common infirmity of the race, and

> 'That, though immovably convinced, we want
> Zeal and the virtue to exist by faith
> As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength
> Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas;'—

who has discovered that

> 'The endowment of immortal power
> Is matched unequally with custom, time,
> And domineering faculties of sense
> In *all*; in most with superadded foes,
> Idle temptations; open vanities,
> Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world;
> And, in the private regions of the mind,
> Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
> Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
> Distress and care,'[1]—

the man who has made these discoveries is not restless either about 'a theory of original causation' or an 'hypothesis' which will 'render the universe comprehensible;' he wants to know whether his own

[1] Wordsworth, *Excursion*, bk. iv.

mysterious life, with aims so lofty, with strength so intermittent, can be perfected by the power of a diviner life; he is engaged in the great search for God.

It may be that some of you who have constructed for yourselves imposing conceptions of God as the Creator of all things, the Infinite, the Absolute, the Almighty, the Unchangeable, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient—a God of your own making—an hypothesis to render the universe comprehensible—may be perplexed and confounded when you attempt to find this God in Christ. But if you have found in Christ the supreme and ultimate authority over your moral and religious life, you have found God in Him. If you have found in Christ the infinite mercy through which your sins are forgiven, you have found God in Him. If you have found in Christ the Giver and the Source and the perpetual support and defence of that divine life which renders righteousness and saintliness possible in this world, and is the beginning of immortal power, perfection, and blessedness, you have found God in Him. Even if your lips falter when you are asked to confess that He is God, He is, indeed and of a truth, God to *you*. Those realms of moral and spiritual life in which for you Christ is supreme, lie far above the realm of material things; He who is supreme in the spiritual order cannot hold any secondary place in the physical; you have already confessed, even if you meant it not, that Christ is eternally one with the Highest.

II

I have been speaking of those claims of Christ—claims implying His divine greatness—which have received verification in our own experience and in the experience of every generation of Christian people. It is in the truth of these that our faith in His divinity has its real and permanent root. There are, however, other claims of His which do not admit of this kind of verification but which contribute to the illustration of His glory.

(I.) He declares that 'the hour cometh, in which all that are in their tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment':[1] that 'the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to His deeds.'[2] *He will raise the dead*: *He will judge the world.*

(II.) In His last great discourse to His disciples He comforted them in the prospect of His approaching departure by telling them that He was passing into the unseen world *to make ready their eternal home with God*: 'In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you.'[3]

(III.) He also told them that *He*—He, the Son

[1] John v. 28-29; comp. vi. 39-44; xi. 24-25.
[2] Matt. xvi. 27; comp. xxv. 31-46; John v. 22-27.
[3] John xiv. 2.

of Man—would *send the Spirit*, who, as we believe, is a divine Person, and who, as all believe, is at least a divine Power: 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me.'[1]

(IV.) *He shares with the Father universal sovereignty*: 'All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine.'[2] He declares that 'all authority' has been given to Him 'in heaven and on earth.'[3] All men are to honour Him 'even as they honour the Father.'[4]

It is in the light of claims like these that we are to read the words in which He claims identity with the Father: 'I and the Father are one'; 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'[5] It is conceivable, perhaps, that such words, had they stood alone, might have been interpreted as meaning nothing more than that through God's grace He had risen into a union with God of the same kind as that which has been achieved by saints, but far more intimate; such an interpretation becomes impossible when we remember the divine authority which He assumes and the divine works which He claims to perform.

He who can exercise such authority, He who can perform such works, must be infinitely more than man. In Him 'the eternal life which was with the

[1] John xv. 26; comp. xiv. 26.
[2] John xvi. 15; comp. Matt. xi. 27.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 18.
[4] John v. 23.
[5] John x. 30; xiv. 9.

Father' has been manifested to our race. In Him 'the Word' which 'was in the beginning with God,' and which 'was God,' without whom 'was not any thing made that hath been made' became Flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, 'glory as of the only begotten from the Father.' He is 'God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.'[1]

[1] Notes N. and O.

VI

THE HOLY SPIRIT

'*I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Advocate* [margin of R.V.] *that he may abide with you for ever.*'—JOHN xiv. 16.

'*It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Advocate* [margin of R.V.] *will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you.*'—JOHN xvi. 7.

IN every age men have been more deeply impressed by the great acts of God in former centuries than by His great acts in their own times. When the Eternal Son of God had become Flesh and was giving sight to the blind, and raising the dead, and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven, in Galilee and in Jerusalem, the Jewish people failed to see His glory but recalled with wonder and adoration the goodness which God had shown to their race when He delivered their fathers from their miseries in Egypt, fed them with manna in the wilderness, and gave them the Land of Promise. Now, we, in our turn, look back with wonder and passionate joy upon the earthly life of our Lord, and we are in peril of missing the blessedness and power of the actual presence—among us and in us—of the Spirit of God. We think with something like envy of Peter and

James and John, of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and in our hearts believe that the blessedness of those who knew Christ in the days of His earthly ministry was greater than our own. There are some of us, I fear, who have not discovered that as the coming of Christ was a new and wonderful thing in the history of our race, the coming of the Holy Spirit was also a new and wonderful thing in the history of our race; and that His coming has made an infinite difference in the life of man.

There are Christian people who, in their religious thought and life, are the contemporaries of those who heard from the lips of our Lord Himself the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of the good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son. They believe that He is 'the Son of the Living God' and, in some great sense, the Saviour of the world; they call Him Master; they love Him and endeavour to obey His commandments. They think that this is enough—that this is the ideal Christian life. They forget that even the Apostles, before they knew the mystery and power of His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven, had the most imperfect knowledge of His true glory, that their religious life was wanting in depth and energy, and that when the hour of darkness came, one of them denied Him and the rest 'forsook Him and fled.'

There are other Christian people who have learnt that He has died for the sins of men, that He has risen and has returned to the Father, and that yet

He is still near to them, and that when they are 'gathered together' in His name He is among them. They think that this completes and exhausts the revelation of the grace of God in Christ. They expect nothing more till He appears in glory. Their life is what the life of the Apostles and the other disciples would have been if, when they met day after day in the upper chamber in Jerusalem, during the interval between our Lord's Ascension and Pentecost, they had forgotten His promise of the Spirit.

There are others again, who are still sitting in that upper chamber, waiting, praying, longing for the coming of the Spirit; not knowing that the Spirit came eighteen hundred years ago with a mighty rushing wind and tongues of flame; that He has never left the Church; that there is therefore no reason for Him to come again. He is here; for according to the words of Christ the Spirit having come abides with us for ever.

The saying of our Lord that it was 'expedient' for us that He should go away is a hard saying for some of us, as it was a hard saying to His disciples who first heard it. It is a hard saying, partly, because we think of the Spirit of God as being only a gracious divine influence granted to ourselves as it was granted to saints who lived before the great redemption, achieved for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not see that the Spirit of God is a Living Person, as the Son of God is a Living Person; and

that the Spirit of God is with *us* as He was not with Abraham or Moses or David or Isaiah, or any of the saints in the old Jewish times, or with Peter, James, and John during our Lord's earthly ministry. These truths are not mere curious speculations interesting only to theologians; they are among the great facts of the Christian gospel; they cannot be disregarded without the gravest loss to the strength and joy of the Christian life.

In the Old Testament Scriptures the Spirit of God is represented as a divine Power acting in the material universe and sustaining the physical life of man; a Power which gave enormous physical strength to Samson, artistic skill to Bezaleel, the genius of leadership to judges and kings; a Power by which prophets came to know the mind of God. But it is surprising how rarely the Spirit of God is represented as sanctifying the life of man. Even in the wonderful visions granted to Jeremiah and Ezekiel of the moral and spiritual regeneration which was to be effected under 'the new covenant,' when instead of writing His law on tables of stone God would write it in the hearts of His people, the grace and glory of the divine Spirit are, as it must seem to us, inadequately recognised.

I do not say that the divine Spirit whom we know —the Holy Spirit, the Personal Spirit, the Spirit who descended on the Church after our Lord's ascension into heaven—was not active in the ethical and spiritual life of devout men in those ancient times; or

that He did not give them light and strength, courage, hope, and consolation; but I say that, speaking generally, the Spirit of God in the Old Testament Scriptures is represented as an impersonal Power—a Power working in the material universe and conferring on exceptional men exceptional endowments for exceptional purposes; that it is not the habit of the Hebrew writers to attribute to the Spirit the righteousness and the faith of the commonalty of God's servants; that in some great and deep sense He was not with the ancient saints as He is with us.[1]

I

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New we are in the presence of a great revelation of the Spirit of God as well as of the Son of God. In the earlier pages of the New Testament, indeed, we are still surrounded by the ancient forms of Jewish thought; the Spirit of God is still known as a Power —not as a Person;[2] and, throughout the New Testament Scriptures, in such phrases as 'being filled with the Spirit,' the old idea of the Spirit of God, as a Power, survives; but in the later books the Power is known as the Power of a divine Person.

(I.) There are premonitions of the great revelation in the earlier teaching of our Lord, but its fulness was reserved for the discourse which He delivered to His disciples during the night in which He was betrayed. To those who loved our Lord best, and who

[1] Note P. [2] Note Q.

had the most perfect faith in Him it was a night of despondency, of despair. The constellations of glorious hope which had been shining in the heaven of their thought were all extinguished. What a wonderful time they had had with Him for two or three years! He had raised them into a new world—a world in which they had discovered that God was nearer to them than they had ever dreamt before. And now He was about to die, and to die a most cruel and shameful death. Their Master was to leave them, and it also seemed as if the happy company of His elect friends was to be broken up for ever. Judas was a traitor; Peter had been warned that before sunrise on the next morning he would deny His Lord; if Peter's fidelity was to give way, who of them was likely to stand firm?

And even if the rest remained faithful and Peter repented, to what purpose would it be? In losing Christ they lost everything. He was their light, their joy, their strength, and their defence. It was true that He had spoken mysterious words about coming to them again; but how were they to endure His absence, and how were they to make any stand against His enemies and theirs, until He returned? He had come, so they believed, to found a divine kingdom among men. He had given them the great honour of sharing His task. But they stood alone; even the elect nation was against both Him and them. Apart from Him they were powerless. The work was His; He was sent of God, so they believed,

to begin and to carry it through. It depended wholly upon Him. While He was with them they could face hatred, contempt, mockery, insult, slander, outrage; but without Him they could do nothing.

It was to meet this despondency, this despair, that our Lord told them that the Father would give them 'another Advocate,'[1] who would 'abide' with them 'for ever;' an Advocate who would maintain His cause and theirs against the whole world. This is the sense of the word which in the text of our translation is represented by the word 'Comforter.' That the Holy Spirit would console them in their sorrow for our Lord's departure, and that He still consoles us in our trouble, is true; but it was not chiefly of the consolation that the Holy Spirit would bring them that our Lord was thinking. To 'comfort,' according to the present use of the word, means to soothe distress, to quiet restless hearts and give them peace; it is the gentlest of ministries. But our Lord was thinking of a ministry of a more robust and energetic kind. Their 'Advocate' was to stand by them in the great conflict by which they were menaced. While our Lord Himself had been with them, it was to Him they looked to repel the assaults of their enemies. His presence gave them confidence and courage. How often they had listened to Him with triumph while He answered subtle questions which were meant to entangle Him; resolved difficulties which seemed to admit of no solution; brought

[1] Note R.

home to the consciences of men who charged Him with unfaithfulness to the Law, their own guilt, covered them with public shame and left them without defence! What courage His miracles had given them! All things were possible to Him. Now they were to have '*another* Advocate.' What our Lord Himself had been to them the Holy Spirit was to be. He was to take the place of Christ. He was not to be an 'Influence,' but what Christ was—a Person, who would lead them, protect them, support them in their struggles and sufferings for Christ and His Kingdom.

All that our Lord says of the Advocate in this discourse makes it certain that He is speaking—not of a Power but of a Person. The Advocate is to 'teach' them all things, and to 'bring to' their 'remembrance' all that Christ Himself had said to them.[1] 'The Spirit of Truth, . . . He shall bear witness of Me: and ye also bear witness.'[2] 'He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself: but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you.'[3] To 'teach,' to 'bear witness,' to 'guide,' to 'speak,' to 'hear,' to 'declare the things that are to come,' to 'take' of the things of Christ and 'declare' them to Christ's friends,—all these are personal acts, and they are all attributed to the Spirit. And equally

[1] John xiv. 26. [2] John xv. 26. [3] John xvi. 13-14.

personal are the acts attributed to the Spirit in relation to those who are not yet the friends of Christ. He is to plead with them; to bring home to them the reality of sin and of righteousness and the awfulness of the judgment of the world.[1] It is a living Person, surely, who is to do these great things, a living Person with clear thought and resolute will—a Person who is to maintain a great conflict with the moral indifference or the moral hostility of mankind.

(II.) We pass from the Four Gospels to the Acts of the Apostles and to the Epistles, and we find that this divine Person is actually present in the Church; has assumed authority there; directs and controls its action.

(*a*) When Ananias brought part of the money for which he had sold his land, and laid it at the Apostles' feet, Peter met him with the awful question, 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to deceive the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price?' When his wife, who was confederate in the deception, came in and confirmed the falsehood of her husband, the Apostle said, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'[2] The Church and its ministers were but the visible organs and representatives of an invisible and divine Person. In trying to deceive the Apostles, Ananias and Sapphira were trying to deceive and were tempting Him.

[1] John xvi. 8-11. [2] Acts v. 3-9.

The presence and the authority of a divine Person in the Church are also illustrated in Paul's address to the Ephesian elders: 'Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops.'[1] The Church at Ephesus is a supernatural society; whatever part the Apostles themselves or the commonalty of the faithful may have had in electing the ministers of the Church or consecrating them to their office—a question which it is unnecessary that I should discuss—they had been made bishops by the choice, the grace, and the authority of the Spirit of God.

(*b*) The free personal activity of the Spirit of God in the government of the Church appears in His distribution of spiritual gifts. 'As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ.'[2] And according to the 'office' or service which a man has to discharge, is the power that is conferred upon him. To one is given 'the word of wisdom;' to another 'the word of knowledge;' to another exceptional forms or degrees of 'faith;' to another 'gifts of healings;' to another 'workings of miracles;' to another 'prophecy;' to another 'divers kinds of tongues;' 'but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally *even as He will*.'[3]

(*c*) Illustrations not less impressive of the free personal action of the Spirit of God as the leader of the Church and the representative of Christ are con-

[1] Acts xx. 28. [2] Rom. xii. 4. [3] 1 Cor. xii. 8-11.

tained in the history of the successive movements by which the Christian Gospel passed beyond the limits of the Jewish race and reached the Gentiles.

(*a*) Cornelius, a Roman soldier, who, without submitting to the Jewish rite of circumcision, had come to worship the One God, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, and who was generous in his compassion for the race which had borne testimony to the divine unity and greatness, was charged by an angel whom he saw in a vision to send for Peter. Peter himself saw a remarkable vision and heard a voice saying, 'What God hath cleansed, call not thou common.'[1] While he was still perplexed as to what the vision might mean, the messengers from Cornelius were at the gate of the house, and were asking for him; and 'the *Spirit* said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting; for *I* have sent them.'[2] It was the Spirit of God who through the ministry of an angel had told Cornelius to send messengers to Peter; and now the Spirit of God sends Peter to Cornelius. Peter preached the Christian Gospel to the soldier and his house, and while the Apostle was still telling the story of Christ, those who were listening to him began to speak with tongues and to magnify God. The same Spirit that had charged him to come to Cæsarea and to tell the story of Christ to Cornelius and to his family and friends, now anticipates and sweeps away whatever

[1] Acts x. 9-16. [2] Acts x. 19, 20.

hesitation Peter might have felt in baptizing persons who stood outside the sacred race which inherited the promises. 'Can any man,' asked Peter, 'forbid the water, that these should not be baptized as well as we?'[1] 'The middle wall of partition' had been broken down. The Spirit of God had made it clear that those who 'once were far off' were 'made nigh by the blood of Christ;' that through Christ both Jew and Gentile were to have access 'in one Spirit unto the Father.'[2]

(*β*) The conversion and baptism of Cornelius marked the first great movement of the Christian Church beyond the rigid enclosure of Judaism; a few years later came a second; and the Spirit of God was the leader of the second movement as He had been the leader of the first. Some of the Jewish Christians—'men of Cyprus and Cyrene'—who had been compelled to leave Jerusalem by the persecution which followed the martyrdom of Stephen, had ventured to preach the Gospel to Greeks as well as to Jews in the city of Antioch. Large numbers 'believed and turned to the Lord;'[3] a strong church was formed, consisting chiefly of persons converted from heathenism. The Church had many 'prophets and teachers,' some of them men who afterwards became famous. The time had come to impose on this powerful Christian community great responsibilities and to confer upon it great honour. The Church had met for fasting and prayer; and

[1] Acts x. 47. [2] Eph. ii. 13-18. [3] Acts xi. 19-21.

'the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.'[1] This is not the action of a 'Power' or the descent of an 'Influence;' it is the authoritative command of a Person. The command is obeyed, and Saul and Barnabas—to quote again the words of the writer of the Acts—'being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.'[2] This was Paul's first missionary journey —the first great attempt to make the Christian redemption known to heathen nations; the beginning of that glorious movement by which, in the course of three or four generations, Christian churches were planted in every province of the Roman empire, and even among races which had never submitted to the Roman arms.

As Paul was 'sent forth' by the personal authority of the Spirit of God, his travels were directed by the same Spirit. He and his friends were 'forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word' in the Roman province of Asia; and when they had determined to go into Bithynia, 'the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.' He was directing them to the western coast of Asia, and there Paul learned in a vision that it was God's will that he should pass over to Europe.[3]

(γ) Before this, the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles had caused a great controversy. Jewish Christians had gone down from Jerusalem to Antioch and had insisted that if the Gentile converts wished

[1] Acts xiii. 1, 2. [2] Acts xiii. 4. [3] Acts xvi. 6-10.

to be saved they must submit to circumcision and keep the law of Moses. These men claimed to speak in the name of James and of the other ministers and members of the church in Jerusalem, who still observed the religious and national customs of their race. It was a great crisis. If the Judaizers had been successful, the Christian Gospel would have been imprisoned within the customs and traditions of a single nation, instead of being free to make its home in the life of every race under heaven; the Christian Church would have been dwarfed to the ignoble proportions of a mere Jewish sect. Whether the Jewish zealots spoke with the authority of James and the church at Jerusalem could be easily learned; the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas and some others to Jerusalem to ask the question. The Apostles and the elders and the whole Church met to receive them. James and his friends disclaimed all responsibility for the teaching of the Judaizers; but this was hardly enough to end the trouble. Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians were living together in many cities; and there were certain practices common among the heathen Gentiles—and in themselves perfectly harmless—which, if not avoided by Gentile Christians, would render friendly social relations between them and their Jewish brethren impossible. To carry the Church peaceably through a period of transition, it was desirable that the Gentile Christians should avoid these harmless practices. And there was one flagrant vice so common

among heathen men, and so lightly regarded by them, that the Jews were apt to suppose that all who had been born heathen were likely to be guilty of it. And so the Jewish church and its leaders determined to send pacific counsels as well as words of brotherly affection to the Gentile churches: 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.'[1]

In this crisis—a crisis in which all the future fortunes of the Church were involved—the Spirit of God definitely intervenes, and marks out the path of safety and peace.

(III.) As the personal activity of the Spirit of God is apparent in His leadership and government of the Church, it is also apparent in His relations to individual men. Those who deny His personality are accustomed to contend that by the Spirit of God we are to understand either (*a*) the higher life of man, or (*b*) God as immanent in the higher life of man.

(*a*) But Paul distinguishes between the Spirit of God and our 'spirit.' For 'the Spirit Himself beareth witness *with* our spirit that we are children of God.'[2] *His* witness to our sonship is distinct from our personal consciousness of sonship. Again, '*we* know not how to pray as we ought: but the *Spirit Himself*

[1] Acts xv. 28, 29. [2] Romans viii. 16.

maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.'[1] What He desires for us He must know; and there are times when He is able to draw us into perfect and intelligent sympathy with His own thought and His own longing; but there are other times when the great things that He desires for us transcend our vision and our hope; and then the Spirit who dwells in us carries on His intercession for us alone; He is too near to us, too intimately one with us, for us not to be conscious of the energy and earnestness of His desires; and we ourselves, as the result of His energy and earnestness, may have a vague and even a passionate longing for some infinite good, but what it is we cannot tell.

(*b*) And as the Spirit cannot be identified with the higher life of man, neither can He be identified with a mere impersonal immanence of God in the life of man. Paul has said in the passage which I have just quoted that we in whom the Spirit dwells may be unable to discover what are the great things which are the subject of His intercession with God for us. But the apostle adds, 'He that searcheth the heart'—that is, God—'knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.'[2] He who intercedes for us with God must be personally distinguishable from God; He who makes intercession for us 'according to the will of God' must be personally distinguishable from God; He whose 'mind' God

[1] Romans viii. 26. [2] Romans viii. 27.

knows must be personally distinguishable from God. No such expressions as these, which occur in the Epistle to the Romans, could have been possible in Old Testament times, when the distinct Personality of the Spirit was unrevealed.

This whole passage illustrates in even a startling manner the truth and reality of the 'coming' of the Holy Ghost—the extent to which, if I may venture to say it, He has separated Himself—as Christ did at His Incarnation—from His eternal blessedness and glory, and entered into the life of man. Paul has represented the 'whole creation' as sending up to God a cry of weariness and suffering and hope; the heavens and the earth and all living things were created for a perfection which, as yet, they have not reached, but towards which they have been moving through unmeasured ages,—'the whole creation *groaneth* and travaileth in pain together until now.' The cry of weariness and suffering and hope also rises from the whole Church of the redeemed on earth; we too are longing for a perfection as yet unattained: 'we *groan* within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.' And then the Apostle attributes the same cry of weariness, of suffering, of hope, to the Spirit of God Himself; He is longing to raise all that are in Christ to an unachieved power and blessedness; the sins of the Church, its infirmities, its errors, its sorrows, are a heavy burden to Him. He is 'resisted' and He is 'grieved;' His intercession for us—so intimately does

He share all the evils of our condition—is a kind of agony; He 'maketh intercession for us with *groanings* which cannot be uttered.'

II

The passages which I have quoted are, I think, sufficient to show that since Christ came, there has been a wonderful revelation of the Spirit of God as a living Person; but even in the New Testament there are many passages in which the older conception of the Spirit survives. It survives among ourselves. For example, we pray to be *baptized* with the Spirit; we speak of the Spirit being *poured out* on the Church. In such phrases as these the Spirit is conceived as a Power rather than as a Person. When we use them we are thinking of the influence and grace of the Spirit as distinguished from the Spirit Himself. This form of thought is perfectly legitimate. Only we should not allow it to obtain such an ascendency as to prevent us from vividly apprehending the truth that the Power is the Power of a Divine Person.

III

To what extent the experience of Christian men in our own times confirms the testimony of our Lord and of His Apostles to the Personality of the Spirit of God, is a question of considerable difficulty. We all know that a divine Power is working in us

and that if it were to cease to work we should fall away from God altogether and should no longer have any place in His Eternal Kingdom. But this Power has an impersonal character; it is the life of our own life, the fire of our love both for God and man, the strength of all our endeavours to keep God's commandments. And, further, large numbers of Christian people find it impossible to distinguish between the power and grace which, in the New Testament, are attributed to the Spirit of God and the life which they receive from Christ. It, therefore, appears to many that if they are to believe in the Personality of the Spirit their belief must rest wholly on the authority of such passages in the New Testament as I have quoted earlier in this discourse.

It is certain that in the case of most Christian people the testimony of experience to the activity of a divine *Power* in originating and maintaining the higher life is much more firm and definite than its testimony to the distinct Personality of the Spirit, who is declared to be the centre and origin of that Power; and yet if the contents of experience are carefully examined it will be found that the evidence of the second truth is as decisive as the evidence of the first. Experience itself bears witness to the Personality of the Spirit. Let me try to make this clear.

In the redemption of our race we know that the movement of God towards man must be met by a movement of man towards God. We are not saved,

apart from our own choice, and by an irresistible force which descends upon us from heaven. The divine love revealed in Christ must be met by human trust; the divine authority revealed in Christ must be met by free submission to that authority. God has 'blessed us with every spiritual blessing . . . in Christ;' but only as we appropriate these blessings by faith and loyalty and by the endeavour to live righteously do these blessings become actually ours. Now I know that I am interpreting the experience of all Christian men accurately when I say, that we are conscious that it is in the strength of a divine Power that we trust in the infinite love of God in Christ for the remission of sins, submit to His authority and rejoice in His grace. But where there is a divine Power there must always be a divine Person; this is not an inference from experience but a part of experience: when a divine Power is acting upon us we know, we are conscious, that it is a divine Person that is acting upon us. And the divine Person in whose power we trust in the Father as revealed in the Son, submit to the Father as revealed in the Son, rejoice in the grace of the Father as revealed in the Son, is surely Another than the Father, and Another than the Son. He is a distinct centre and source of divine activity.

Let me state it again. The manifestation of God in Christ is a divine appeal to our faith and reverence and submission; it is not in our own strength that we answer it, but in the power of a divine Person who

enables us to approach God in Christ, even as in Christ God has approached us. Christ is the divine gift; but we have to receive the gift, or it is unavailing; it is in the power of Another than Christ that we receive it. And so Christian experience as well as the authority of our Lord and of His Apostles, bears testimony to the distinct personality of the Spirit of God.

IV

There is another question to which an answer must be attempted before I close. I have said that the Spirit of God dwells in Christian men as He did not dwell even in great saints before the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John, in a comment upon our Lord's words about the fountains of 'living water,' which were to spring up in those who believed on Him, says: 'This spake He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified:'[1] and this comment is but a brief and explicit statement of a truth which is wrought into the very substance of the New Testament. That a new and higher form of spiritual life has appeared in Christian times than appeared in the times before our Lord, is certain. This life is attributed to the 'coming' of the Holy Spirit. Can we discover why it is that the Spirit did not—could not—come, till Christ was 'glorified'?

[1] John vii. 39.

It is with faltering steps that we must pursue this inquiry, and with humility and reverence. We may well feel that 'such knowledge is too wonderful' for us, that 'it is high,' we cannot 'attain unto it.' In these divine and mysterious realms, self-confidence would be arrogant and profane presumption. And yet if, even here, any fragment of truth is accessible to us we should endeavour to discover it.

What then is meant by our Lord being 'glorified'? It means infinitely more than we can know; but I suppose that, at least, it means this, that when our Lord returned to the Father His human nature, in all its capacities and powers, was wonderfully expanded and exalted. Even while He was on earth His human life, as it was gradually developed and as it rose, through righteousness and patient suffering, to a higher and still higher perfection, was more and more completely penetrated with the divine life of the Eternal Word. It still remained human, but, in it and through it, that 'eternal life which was with the Father was manifested' to men.[1] When He returned to the Father He did not cease to be man, but it would appear that His human life was wholly transfigured by the life of the Eternal Son, who was in the beginning with God and who was God.[2]

We are told that man as we know him in these last days has reached his present greatness by a long

[1] John i. 2.

[2] See *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 152-160. By R. W. Dale. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

and difficult and painful ascent from lower forms of life; that the ascent began in times so distant that the imagination is confounded in the attempt to conceive of the intervening ages; that in the inferior forms of being through which our life has passed, there may be discovered premonitions and prophecies of our present finer organisation and larger powers; that we in our actual life inherit the results of that vast process of development. According to the Christian conception of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory, the life of man has in Him made a new ascent, has passed upwards to new heights of perfection and power, has been taken into perfect union with the life of the Eternal Son of God. Even during His earthly life, because of His absolute freedom from sin and because in Him the Eternal Word had become flesh, the Spirit of God dwelt in Him as He had never dwelt in prophet or saint; but now that the Lord Jesus, still remaining man, has returned to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, it must be possible for the Spirit to dwell in Him in a still more wonderful way. His glorified humanity is the very home and temple of the Spirit of God.

It is in the power of this glorified human life that Christ is the new Head of the human race. Those who are 'in Christ' share His life—a human life which has been drawn into perfect union with the life of God. In Christ we have 'become partakers of the divine nature.' Before Christ was glorified, this perfect union of His human life with the life of God

had not been achieved; the divinely human life, in its consummate and transcendent perfection, did not exist; it could not therefore be shared with the race. It is ours now because Christ is glorified, and because we are in Christ; and therefore the Spirit can dwell in us as He could not dwell in even the most saintly souls before Christ ascended to His glory. Christ is the Vine, we are the branches. When He entered into His glory a kind of life became possible to men that was not possible before. His glorification was ours.

Throughout this discussion I have had to speak of the life of our Lord—His glorified human life—as though it were a physical substance which could be imparted to those who are one with Him. But life is not a substance; and no such physical transference is possible. Life should be spoken of in terms of life; but the infirmity of human language and the limits of human thought compel the use of words which are inappropriate to the mystery. The life of Christ becomes ours; the fact we know; the manner of it is inscrutable.

VII

THE TRINITY

'*Through Him* (the Lord Jesus Christ) *we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*'—EPH. ii. 8.

IN previous discourses I have endeavoured to show that the Christian Gospel reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, and that the Holy Spirit is not merely a divine Influence or a divine Power, but a divine Person; I have also endeavoured to show that these great truths do not rest merely on authority, but have been confirmed in the experience of Christian men in all countries and all ages.

I

The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that Father, Son, and Spirit are one God. In its substance it is not a merely speculative doctrine; it is a brief summary of those great facts which through eighteen hundred years have revealed their power and glory in the moral and spiritual life of the Christian Church. It is a declaration that in the Lord Jesus Christ, heaven and earth have been brought together; that in Him a divine Person became man; that having found Christ, we have found God; that 'He is

the same yesterday, and to-day, yea, and for ever,' Son of God, Son of man, the Lord, the Saviour, the Brother of our race. It is a declaration that the great 'Advocate,' who now sustains the life of the Church, leads it into all the truth, directs its activity, and consoles its sorrows, is a divine Person whose 'coming' has brought with it such transcendent grace as more than to compensate for the withdrawal from the world of our Lord's visible presence and His return to the Father.

It may, indeed, be contended that one and the same Person has manifested Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit; and that, therefore, it is possible to believe in the divine glory of our Lord and in the personal solicitude of the divine Spirit for the life and perfection of the Church without believing in the Trinity. I rejoice to acknowledge that the substance of some great truths is received by many who find insuperable difficulties in the traditional definitions of them. If you love and obey and trust and worship the Lord Jesus Christ as a divine Person; if you shrink from sin lest you should 'grieve' the Holy Spirit, if His care for you and His patience with you fill your heart with courage and gratitude; and if you believe, at the same time, that the Son and the Spirit are one with the Eternal Father, your life is rooted in the facts which the doctrine of the Trinity is intended to express, although you may be unable to accept the Trinitarian creed.

But the theory that Father, Son, and Spirit are but

three forms in which one and the same Person is manifested—as one and the same person may be the father of a family, sovereign of a kingdom, and commander of an army—appears to give no adequate account of the facts of our Lord's history, or of some of the most memorable parts of His teaching. Our Lord prayed to the Father; He said that the Father loved Him; and He gave as the reason for the love, 'for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.'[1] It is clear that He Himself was not the Father but Another. His whole relation to the Father was that of a Person to a Person. Nor can the Lord Jesus Christ be personally identified with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was not Christ; for Christ was to 'send' Him and He was to 'bear witness of Christ.'[2] He was not Christ; for He was to 'glorify' Christ: 'He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you.'[3] The relations between Father, Son, and Spirit are analogous to those which exist between different persons; they are not analogous to the relations which exist between different forms of the activity of the same person.[4]

II

That the Lord Jesus Christ, as known to *us*, is a divine Person, and that the Spirit of God, as known to *us*, is also a divine Person, has been shown in previous discourses. The immediate question with which we have to deal this morning is whether in the

[1] John viii. 29.
[2] John xv. 26.
[3] John xvi. 14.
[4] Note S.

Incarnation of our Lord and in the 'coming' of the Spirit and His permanent activity in the Church and in the world there is a revelation of the inner and eternal life of God. Have we the right to assume that the historic manifestation of God to our race discloses anything of God's own eternal being? But this is really to ask whether the revelation of God really reveals God—shows us what God is—manifests His 'eternal life.' It is to ask whether when we have seen Christ, and seen Him in His relations to the Father, we have seen the 'Truth.' To those who have been filled with wonder by the glory of Christ, and have known the power of His redemption, the answer to this question cannot be uncertain. Wherever else we may be surrounded by illusions, we are in contact with eternal realities when we are in the presence of Christ. We are sure that in Him God is really revealed, and that the relations between Him and the Father have their ground in the life of the Eternal. The mystery of that life remains impenetrable; but the Incarnation reveals the truth that the eternal life of God has not been an awful loneliness; that in some wonderful sense the Father has always been the Father, and the Son the Son. And the revealed relations of the Spirit to both Father and Son have also their eternal ground in the Godhead; they did not originate in order that God's mercy might achieve our redemption; they are *revealed* in the great acts by which redemption is achieved; that they are revealed implies that they already existed.

From Eternity to Eternity—this is the Trinitarian doctrine—God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God—but not apart from the Son and the Spirit. The Son is God—but not apart from the Father and the Spirit. The Spirit is God—but not apart from the Father and the Son. There is one God, but in the Godhead there are, according to the technical language of theology and the creeds, three Persons. There are not three Gods, but, in the life and being of the One God, there are three Centres of consciousness, volition, and activity; and these are known to us as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

III

There have been philosophical attempts to demonstrate that by an eternal necessity there must be a Trinity in the divine life. These attempts do not seem to me to have been successful. When the discovery has been made, whether through authority or experience, or both, that the Father is divine, the Son divine, and the Spirit divine, a philosophical scheme may, perhaps, be constructed to show that the idea of a divine Trinity in unity is not unreasonable; but I doubt the possibility of demonstrating the doctrine of the Trinity by any processes of philosophical reasoning.

There have also been attempts to alleviate the difficulties which surround the doctrine by suggesting that there are some familiar analogies to the mystery;

that, for instance, in our own nature there is a trinity of body, soul, and spirit, and that this trinity is consistent with the unity of human life. I should be unwilling to deprive any one of the aid to faith that he may find in analogies of this kind; but I must acknowledge that, for me, they are wholly worthless. Nor am I surprised that no real analogy can be discovered in created life to the life of the Eternal. God is God. There can be none like Him. He stands apart.

It was not by any process of philosophical speculation on the nature of God that the Church finally reached the doctrine of the Trinity, but by the path of faith and Christian experience. The Church was sure that Christ is a divine Person; this belief was implicated in its very life; to surrender it would have been to surrender all its hopes and the characteristic power of the Christian Gospel. It was sure that the Spirit is a divine Person; this belief was also implicated in its very life; to surrender it would have been to surrender some of the great promises of Christ, and to lose all the courage and strength that come from the belief that a divine Person has His home in the Church and in the individual life of Christian men. Holding fast these two truths, that the Son is a divine Person, and the Spirit a divine Person, the Church, in order to maintain the unity of God, affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine is an attempt to assert the divine unity, while asserting the divinity of the Son and of the Spirit.

The doctrine is no doubt infinitely mysterious. But God must always be an infinite mystery to us, whatever may be our conception of Him. His eternal life must be a mystery whether we conceive of it as an awful and loveless solitude, or whether we conceive of it as an eternal and blessed fellowship of love. His relations to the universe must also be a mystery; the understanding is as powerless to conceive how the Infinite can be related to the finite, the Eternal to creatures that have their existence in time, as it is to determine how Father, Son, and Spirit can be one God. We are no nearer to an intellectual apprehension of the life and nature of God when we deny the doctrine of the Trinity, than when we accept it. The cloud of mystery which conceals from us the Eternal mystery has shifted its place, but it is not dissipated. It is as impenetrable as it was before.

IV

But I go further. Though infinitely mysterious, the revelation of the One God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, fulfils—and it alone fulfils—the profoundest, the richest, the noblest conception of the divine life.

'Nothing is easier,' as Dr. Newman said, 'than to use the word God and mean nothing by it.'[1] What do we really mean when we speak of God?

[1] J. H. Newman, *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education*, p. 60. Dublin: Duffy, 1852.

For what kind of a Being does the word stand? The very terms in which I have stated the question show how ineffectual are all the common instruments of human thought in this high inquiry; for God can belong to no 'kind;' He is not one of a class; He is alone; He is not part of the universe; He is above it; we learn what God is, not so much from what the world is, as from what it is not.[1] Let me then change the form of the question, and ask, For whom does the word 'God' stand?

(I.) It stands for One of whose greatness it seems presumptuous to speak, and in whose presence silence seems the truest worship. He lives from Eternity to Eternity. He is here; He is everywhere; there is no remotest region where He is not. To say that He created all things, and that, after sustaining all things through countless ages, He fainteth not, neither is He weary, is to say nothing concerning His infinite strength: He Himself is infinitely greater than the universe, and he lives, has ever lived, and will live for ever, in the power of His own life. We say—and yet we know not what we are saying—that all things in this world and in all worlds, are present to His mind; in this world—every grain of sand on the desolate shores of unknown seas, every ripple that breaks the surface of quiet island streams, every

[1] 'We believe in the Infinite, not because of what the finite is, but quite as much because of what the finite is not; and our first idea of the former is, therefore, simply that it is the negation of the latter.' Edward Caird, *A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant*, p. 647. Glasgow: Maclehose, 1877.

wave that foams in mid-ocean; the flutter of every leaf in a thousand forests; the birth and the death of every wild-flower; every drop of dew that glitters in the morning sun; the song of every bird; the joy and the pain of every living thing;—every word that is spoken, every deed that is done, by all the millions of the human race; every settled purpose, every transient thought, every vague longing, every passion, every memory, every hope, of every man in all countries and in all times. We say that all things are present to His mind—all things in the heavens above as well as on the earth beneath: and then,—if the countless worlds which relieve the solitudes of the infinite realms of space are filled, as well they may be, with countless races of living creatures having other joys and sorrows than ours, other forms of intellectual faculty, other temptations to sin, other possibilities of virtue,—their innumerable and various lives with all the shadows that darken, and all the lights that brighten them, are always present to Him.

He Himself is removed by an infinite distance from all the fluctuations and vicissitudes of created life. His blessedness is unclouded, His peace unbroken, by the storms that beat upon the universe, which is infinitely beneath Him. His righteousness can be assailed by no temptations. The Law of Righteousness itself, though not the creature of His will, is not above Him. In His supremacy the law is supreme; He does not obey it. In Him and through Him it exerts its august authority. He dwells in light

that no man can approach unto. Clouds and darkness are round Him. God is great, and we know Him not.

But this is a most imperfect account of the distance which separates God from the universe. No conception of God satisfies the necessities of abstract thought that does not represent Him as in some wonderful way transcending the universe. And yet a God who absolutely transcended the universe would be unknown to the universe, and the universe would be unknown to Him. Beyond the reach of our thought, He would also be beyond the reach of our love and our faith; we could render Him no true obedience, no true worship. We might bow before Him with fear and awe, if we had some vague thoughts of His existence and greatness, but could receive from Him no strength for righteousness and no consolation in sorrow. His glory would give no glory to the life of man.

In the doctrine of the Trinity this transcendence of God is recognised. The Eternal Father would have remained for ever unknown but for the Word that 'was in the beginning with God' and 'was God.' 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him.'[1] 'No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth

[1] John i. 1-4, 18.

to reveal Him.'[1] A God that in some sense transcends the universe is necessary to thought and to worship: and the transcendence of the divine life is maintained in the Father; while in Christ, God is manifested to the intellect, the conscience, and the heart of man.

(II.) We need, I say, a God who is 'afar off,' infinitely greater than ourselves—belonging to other realms of life.

But we also need a God who is 'nigh at hand.' The legendary incarnations of divine persons, which have so great a place in some Oriental religions, are rude and coarse witnesses to this craving. A remote God reigning in inaccessible heights of majesty and glory does not satisfy us. He is too far away for us to be sure of His sympathy, compassion, and grace. We think that He can have no real knowledge of our troubles, our perplexities, our moral and spiritual conflicts. To Him on those heights of peace, human life must present an altogether different aspect from that which it presents to us, who are weary under its burdens, vexed by its cares, disheartened by its disappointments, incessantly harassed by its temptations. There are times, I suppose, in the history of many of us when, though we hardly acknowledge it to ourselves, there is a latent discontent that He who created the world should, as we imagine, have no share in its troubles.

[1] Matt. xi. 27.

(*a*) The Christian doctrine of the Trinity meets these cravings, and more than meets them. Christ not only reveals the Infinite and the Eternal God who in His Infinitude and Eternity transcends the universe and remains for ever above and apart from it. He accepts human limitations, knows, by actual experience, human joys and the sharpest of human pains; He hungers and thirsts; He has not where to lay His head; He has friends who love Him and whom He loves; He has bitter enemies; He is tempted; He dies a cruel death. We sometimes resent the shame and the suffering which by the divine order of the world come upon us from the sins of other men, and are almost ready to ask—not, Has God forgotten to be gracious?—but, Has He forgotten to be just?—and Christ dies for the sins of the race.

This is a most wonderful and glorious revelation of God. It is true that God transcends the universe and that the distance between Him and our race is infinite: but it is also true that in the Eternal life of the Godhead there is a divine 'Person' so near akin to us that it was possible for Him to take our life into His own, to 'become Flesh,' to make His home in the world, to share the happiness and the misery of the race. Now we know that God is a God 'nigh at hand' as well as a God 'afar off.'

(*β*) Again, Christ—and this is of supreme importance to us—revealed, under the forms of human righteousness, a divine perfection. It is the characteristic glory of the Eternal that in Him lies ultimate and

supreme authority over all the realms of moral and spiritual life. His authority is different, in *principle*, from the authority of a father over his children or of a sovereign over his subjects. And to argue from the powers and rights of parents and sovereigns to the powers and rights of God is a perilous procedure. Fathers and sovereigns are themselves under a higher law which determines the limits of their authority and the manner in which they are to exercise it. They are just and merciful rulers in the measure in which they obey that law. But God is not 'under law;' He does not achieve His perfection by His perfect obedience to an authority above Himself. The supremacy which conscience acknowledges in the eternal law of righteousness is identical with the supremacy of God. This, I say, is His characteristic glory. In this He eternally transcends—and transcends in the sphere of morals—all His creatures.

But the roots of *our* righteousness, which is a righteousness of obedience, could not be in God, if in Him there were only the righteousness of authority. And yet we have an invincible conviction that all righteousness in us must be derived from Him; if it were not so, we should be separated from God by an impassable gulf in precisely those regions of our life in which we believe that we are nearest to Him. In the Incarnation the eternal life and perfection of the Son of God—to quote words which I have used elsewhere—'were revealed in obedience and submission, as the eternal life and perfection of the Father are

for ever revealed in authority. Obedience, submission—these also are Divine. If in the Father there is the assertion of the supreme sovereignty of the Eternal Law of Righteousness—if His will is the authoritative expression of that Law—if this is His characteristic glory, the free acceptance of that sovereignty is the characteristic glory of the Son.'[1] In the Godhead, according to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, there are the roots and springs of all created righteousness. This was the truth which underlay the theory of Apollinaris, that in the Eternal Word humanity had an eternal existence in the life of God.

(III.) Let us now turn to the Holy Spirit. The springs of our righteousness are in Christ; it is in the power of His Sonship that we are sons of God, and in the power of His life that we live the life of the sons of God—a life of obedience, submission, trust, and love. But how is the life that dwells in Christ to become ours? It is the gift of God's grace; but this is a kind of gift which must be received, or it remains ineffectual. God's free approach to man must be met by man's free approach to God. To consider the great subject in another form—in Christ, God who transcends the universe is revealed to our race—and, as I believe, to all races of spiritual beings in all worlds; but how are we to receive the

[1] *Fellowship with Christ*, p. 349. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891.

revelation? Our eyes are too dim to perceive the divine glory, our ears too dull to catch the divine voice and to discover in it the accent of the Eternal. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity answers these questions. The Divine Spirit enables us to see God in Christ and to recognise the voice of the Good Shepherd. 'No man,' said our Lord, 'can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him;'[1] and the Father 'draws' men to Christ by the power of the Spirit. The grace which draws men to Christ may be resisted and defeated; but apart from it no man believes in Him, follows Him, and receives eternal salvation.

It has been the dream of the childhood of speculation as, I suppose, it is still sometimes the dream of the childhood of individual men, that the visible universe is nothing more than the vivid and glorious imagination of the Eternal Mind, and that we ourselves are but the transient or enduring thoughts of God. This is the simplest and most obvious solution of the mystery of creation. Pantheism in all its forms is the elaborate and systematic development of this conception. The least mystical of all the great English poets has given a rude expression of this theory in well-known lines:—

> 'All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body Nature is and God the soul;
> That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
> Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame;

[1] John vi. 44.

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph, that adores and burns:
To Him, no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects and equals all.'[1]

Nature is 'the Body,' of which God is 'the Soul': this was the form in which Pope conceived of the immanence of God in the universe.

The whole history both of speculation and of religion bears witness to man's sense of the reality of this immanence. In age after age, and among nations widely differing from each other in the forms of their thought and of their faith, there has been a dim consciousness of the truth that somewhere, in the innermost and deepest depths of the life of man, there is a divine Power that moves him to seek and to adore a divine Power infinitely above him. Akin to this has been the impulse which has created the fairest and most graceful, the most grotesque and most brutal mythologies. Men have believed that the gods were not merely reigning in a remote heaven, looking down upon the universe from outside, but that there were divine Powers—divine Persons—in trees and in the running streams and in the genial soil and in the sun and in the stars. Contrasted with this ancient faith the belief in a God who is withdrawn by His

[1] Pope, *Essay on Man.* Epistle 1. 266-280.

awful greatness to an inconceivable distance from mankind, a God infinite, invisible, unchangeable, passionless, transcending all search, to be conceived and defined by negations rather than by positive thought—contrasted, I say, with the ancient faith the belief in such a God, if it is very sublime, is very cheerless. It leaves the world grey and cold; the light that shone on earth and sea has faded. And there are moods in which many of us feel that the exchange of the old divinities for the God of philosophy is a poor one:—

> 'I 'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.'[1]

The Hebrews, while maintaining firmly the unity of God and His transcendent greatness, escaped the desolation of philosophical Deism by finding the activity of the 'Spirit of God' in the visible creation and in the life of man. They approached, as I have said in an earlier discourse, the conception of the divine immanence. But the truth is affirmed, in its noblest form and in relation to the highest regions of human life, in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In the Father, God personally transcends the life and thought of man; in the Son, God is personally revealed to man; in the Spirit, God is immanent in the higher life of man. Transcendence, immanence, the power

[1] Wordsworth.

of self-revelation—these are all included in the Christian conception of God in relation to man; and this conception may be the solid ground of a philosophical conception of God's relation to the whole universe.

V

There are large numbers of persons to whom these inquiries into the mysteries of the life of God seem alien from the true and original genius of the Christian Gospel. A contrast, as to both form and content, has been drawn between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed; 'an ethical sermon,' it has been said, 'stood in the forefront of the teaching of Jesus Christ, and a metaphysical creed in the forefront of the Christianity of the fourth century.' And, according to the late Dr. Hatch, whose premature death was an irreparable loss to more than one branch of theological learning, the contrast indicates 'a change in the centre of gravity from conduct to belief.'[1]

Dr. Hatch was a distinguished scholar, and his contention, with all that it implies, requires grave and elaborate discussion. But many of those who speak with the greatest scorn of Christian theology seem never to have read, or to have wholly forgotten, a large part of that very Sermon on the Mount for whose

[1] Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, p. 2. London: Williams and Norgate.

ethical teaching they express so much enthusiasm. In that sermon our Lord said, 'Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are *ye* when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.'[1] Who is this that places persecution for *His* sake side by side with persecution for 'righteousness' sake,' and declares that whether men suffer for loyalty to Him or for loyalty to righteousness they are to receive their reward in the divine kingdom? Who is it that in that sermon places His own authority side by side with the authority of God, and gives to the Jewish people and to all mankind new laws which require a deeper and more inward righteousness than was required by the ten commandments?[2] Who is it that in that sermon assumes the awful authority of pronouncing final judgment on men? 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day'—to *Me*—'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Thy name, and by Thy name cast out devils, and by Thy name do many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'[3] These are not words that we ever heard before, or have ever heard since, from teacher or prophet. Who is He?

[1] Matt. v. 10-12. [2] Matt. v. 21-28. [3] Matt. vii. 21-23.

That question cannot be silenced when words like these have once been spoken.

And the ethical teaching of the Sermon on the Mount derives its unique power from the profound faith of Christian men in all ages that it comes from the lips of One who is infinitely greater than man,—from the lips of One who, among all the prophets that have spoken to us of duty and of God, stands alone and supreme—of One in whom the Eternal Son of God, at the impulse of an infinite love for our race, became man that He might give us not only the law but the example of the perfect life, and by a stupendous act of self-sacrifice deliver us from sin and from eternal destruction. The Nicene Creed was only a definite protest against forms of thought which, by denying to the Lord Jesus Christ His divine glory, would have paralysed the characteristic power of His ethical teaching.

Nor is it true that 'a metaphysical creed' stood 'in the forefront of the Christianity of the fourth century,' or that a metaphysical creed has stood in the forefront of Christianity in any century. To a theological scholar the great creeds of the Church have naturally a dominant interest; in the chosen province of his investigation they hold the most conspicuous place. But when he says that they stand 'in the forefront' of the Christianity of the fourth century, or of any other century, the theological scholar commits an error of the same kind as that which is committed by secular historians who

have placed 'in the forefront' of the history of nations, the accession and the death of kings, dynastic changes, the rise and fall of great statesmen, the battles which have been lost and won. All these are to the historian immensely interesting, and they are really important; but their importance is derived from their effect on the life and condition of the forgotten millions who had no immediate concern in them. To the common people the great events in the national life have been the years of plenty, in which they have had abundant food, and the years of famine when they have died of starvation; the new inventions and the changes in agricultural and manufacturing industry which have brought wealth or poverty to hundreds of thousands of obscure homes; the discoveries by which great epidemics which once inflicted desolation on whole continents have been averted or lessened in virulence; the growth in the community of a spirit of compassion which has led to the creation of agencies for the relief of human misery; the awakening of intellectual activity among masses of the people to whom intellectual activity had been unknown; the improvement or the deterioration of private morals; the revival or the decline of religious faith.

Ecclesiastical historians have naturally placed the creeds of great councils 'in the forefront' of the history of the Church; and the creeds have their importance—an importance I should be the last to disparage. The struggle of Athanasius was a struggle for the very substance of the Gospel of Christ; and

the creed of Nicæa is the symbol of his victory. But to the common millions of Christian men in all ages, the anxieties of poverty, the exhaustion of care, physical pain, the guilt of sin, the incessant struggle with temptation, the agonies of bereavement, the mystery of death, the dread of judgment to come, have been infinitely more urgent and more absorbing than the controversies of theologians; and the Gospel, with its revelation of an infinite mercy and an eternal redemption, with its divine consolations and its immortal hopes, has had a far larger place in their life and thoughts than the greatest of the creeds.

The warning of Thomas à Kempis may be less necessary in our own age than it has been in some past ages; but it is still necessary: 'What will it profit thee to be able to discourse profoundly on the Trinity if thou art wanting in humility and so art displeasing to the Trinity.'[1] But a clear knowledge of eternal things—so far as they can be clearly known—has also its value in relation to life and practice. And while giving heed to the warning of the saintly mystic we should also follow the example of the great apostle, who said, 'I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.'[2]

[1] *De Imitatione*, cap. i. 3. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

VIII

MAN

'*God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.*'—GEN. i. 27.

'*The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*' —GEN. ii. 7.

'*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.*'—JOHN i. 1, 14.

IN the Christian Scriptures there is very little about the original creation of the human race, but the whole conception of man as implied in the Incarnation and in the Christian redemption confirms that which is given in a picturesque and imaginative form in the earlier pages of the Old Testament.[1] I propose, therefore, to introduce what I have to say on the Christian doctrine of Man by some observations on the two passages in the book of Genesis which I have just read. I shall begin with the passage in the second chapter.

I

(I.) '*The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.*' That looks like a very simple statement.

[1] Note T.

It has really the most profound religious and moral significance. Man did not descend out of Heaven; nor was he created by the divine power out of nothing. He was brought up out of the dust. How this happened; through what intervening forms of being, if any, the 'dust' passed before it became Man,—these are questions which, I suppose, never occurred to those who first constructed and first received this account of the origin of the human race. The story was not intended to satisfy scientific curiosity, but to convey certain practical truths concerning the nature of man and concerning man's relations to the universe. These truths are very obvious.

(*a*) We are what we are, so far as the constitution of our nature is concerned, by the will of God. God formed us of the 'dust.' We are a part of the visible and material universe. Through our flesh we are implicated in its fortunes, dependent upon its support, and have to reckon with its laws. This has been determined by the will of God. It follows that the physical universe is not in itself evil, and that our physical nature is not in itself any hindrance to the perfect fulfilment of the divine law. God Himself, who loves righteousness, and created us that we might achieve righteousness, formed us of 'dust.'

There is a false spiritualism which regards the physical nature of man as being irreconcilable to the divine law. That pernicious theory leads, on the one hand, to a gloomy and cruel asceticism, and on the other to flagrant and reckless immorality. It either

demands from man artificial and impossible virtues or sanctions his indulgence in the foulest vices. For if the 'flesh' is necessarily evil there are two courses open to us: Let us crush the evil thing, deny it all pleasures, torture it, enfeeble it, suppress it: or, let us give our baser passions a loose rein; if we can never discipline our physical nature to righteousness, if it is evil, and necessarily evil, there can be no obligation to subject it to any moral restraint. The Hebrew conception of human nature was infinitely nobler; it affirmed that our physical nature was God's own creation; it cannot, therefore, be either His enemy or ours. And so a Jewish psalmist offered the prayer: '*Thy hands have made me and fashioned me*: give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.'[1]

(*b*) Take a second point in the ancient tradition: '*The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*' That phrase, 'a living soul,' is likely to mislead you. It does not mean that man received what we generally mean when we speak of the 'soul'—a spiritual life which is separable from the body. The phrase occurs again in Gen. v. 19: 'And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every *living creature*, that was the name thereof.' The Hebrew phrase translated 'living creature' in that

[1] Psalm cxix. 73.

verse is the phrase which is translated 'living soul' in the account of the creation of man. All that it means is that man became one of the innumerable creatures that have life. In the first chapter of Genesis the creation of man is represented as taking place on the same day as the creation of beasts and cattle. In the second chapter he receives the same title, 'a living soul,' or 'a living creature,' that is given to 'every beast of the field and every fowl of the air.' And, very curiously, the story in the second chapter (vv. 18-20) suggests that Adam searched among all these living creatures—the beasts and the birds—for a companion to relieve his solitude, and found none, and that, therefore, God created Eve. He belonged to the same order as these other races, but he was so far above them that among them all 'there was not found a help meet for him.'[1]

There was indeed a peculiarity in his creation. 'God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;' this is not said of any of the inferior races. Man's life is different from the life of animals; it is, in some special sense, a divine gift. That was an important thing for men to know in the beginning of human history: it is an important thing for us to know. We are discovering more and more clearly how near akin we are to other animal races, and a new spirit of affection for them has risen during the last half century. We not only insist on the duty of treating

[1] Gen. ii. 20.

them with consideration and kindness, we are beginning to speak of the 'rights' of animals as we have long been accustomed to speak of the 'rights' of men. But unless we remember that we have a life infinitely transcending the life which has been commonly attributed to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, we shall miss the dignity and greatness for which God created us.

(II.) You will notice that there is an impressive difference between the account of the creation of man in the second chapter of Genesis and the account given in the first. The account in the second chapter probably preserves a very early conception of the origin and nature of man; the account in the first chapter, which has been nobly called 'The Psalm of Creation,' probably belongs, at least in its present form, to a very much later date—how much later, it is not easy to say. In the second chapter we are only told that God breathed into the nostrils of man the breath of life and that man became 'a living creature.' In the first chapter we have the great declaration: 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.'[1] There lies the possibility of God's supreme revelation of Himself to the human race. God could not have become man unless man had been made in the image of God. Nowhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures is there so lofty an idea of human nature. The Psalm of Creation rises like an august mountain, touching

[1] Note U.

the very heavens; it looks across the intervening centuries and finds nothing as lofty as itself until it discovers the still sublimer summits of the first chapter of John's Gospel which may be described as the Christian Book of Genesis: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. . . . *And the Word became Flesh*, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.'[1]

As I have said, the account of the creation of man in the first chapter is far in advance of the account in the second; and yet the earlier discovery prepared the way for the later one. The earlier tradition described man's life as unique; it came in a special way from God; God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and devout thought, under the illumination and guidance of the Spirit of God, was led on to the great truth of the first chapter: 'God created man in His own image.'

II

(I.) In what this 'image' and 'likeness' consisted has been the subject of great controversy. It has become 'much involved,' as Dr. Laidlaw says in his excellent treatise on *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, 'with dogmatic presuppositions. Partly has this arisen

[1] John i. 1-3, 14.

from the brevity of the Scripture statements. The primitive state of man became a favourite battle-ground of theologians, because it is like unexplored territory, which in maps the geographer can fill up at his pleasure. Theologians in their systems could draw up and deploy, in this comparatively empty space, the principles which they were afterwards to bring into action in more crowded departments. The doctrine of the image became a great topic, so soon as sin and grace were the key-positions in theological controversy, because the idea formed of man's original nature and endowments had a direct bearing on the measure of the loss caused by the fall, and upon the consequent necessity and nature of redemption.'[1]

For myself, I am not disposed to believe that in this account of the nature of man, which represents the religious knowledge given to the race long before the coming of Christ, we can find very much to assist us in the solution of these great mysteries. The picturesque narratives in the early pages of the book of Genesis illustrate in a very simple form the divine idea of man, and of the life of man, and the failure of the race to fulfil it. And even if they are regarded as literal histories they do not support the theory that the first man had such glorious intellectual powers and such immense knowledge that Aristotle was but 'the ruins of Adam,' or such a noble righteousness and such a consummate sanctity that he touched the

[1] Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, p. 108. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1879.

loftiest heights of human perfection. The writer of the Psalm of Creation had indeed seen a most profound truth when he learnt that man was made in the divine image. The truth must have come either to himself or to his predecessors from God. It is a truth, the depth and glory of which have been more and more fully disclosed by all later revelations; but how much it meant to him we cannot tell. To us it means that man was created with such powers and such possibilities, and held such a position in relation to the universe, that the Eternal Son of God could become man and, under the conditions of a human life, reveal the glory of the Father. This discovery, however, reaches us through the Incarnation. The test to which man's righteousness is subjected in the story of the Temptation suggests that, according to the Hebrew conception, the condition of Adam both intellectually and morally was a condition of childhood.

And it is important to remember that 'the image of God,' according to Hebrew thought, was not lost, however seriously it may have been impaired, by what is described as the Fall. In Genesis v. 1-3, we read: 'In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; . . . and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image; and called his name Seth'—meaning that, as Adam was created in the image of God, Seth inherited that image. After the Flood God is represented as saying to Noah

'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man.'[1] Murder is a kind of sacrilege; to kill a man is to destroy the life of a creature created in the divine image; the crime is to be punished with death. James too, in his epistle, insists that the desperate wickedness of the tongue is shown in its reckless disregard of the divine image in man, 'Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made in the image of God';[2] in cursing men we therefore show a want of reverence for God Himself, in whose image they were made, and are guilty of a certain measure of profanity.[3]

The 'image of God' therefore, according to these ancient Scriptures, does not necessarily include moral and spiritual perfection; it must include the possibilities of achieving it; it reveals the divine purpose that man should achieve it; but man, even after he has sinned, still retains the 'image of God' in the sense in which it is attributed to him in the Hebrew Scriptures. It belongs to his *nature*, not to his *character*. Man was made in the 'image of God' because he is a free, intelligent, self-conscious, and moral Personality. Some of these attributes may be found, in an inferior degree, in inferior races; but whatever premonitions of his greatness they may exhibit, he stands alone and supreme; and in virtue of this solitary supremacy man, under God, is the Sovereign of Creation.

[1] Gen. ix. 6. [2] James iii. 9. [3] Note V.

III

(I.) Of man's intelligence and self-consciousness it is unnecessary that I should speak; the crowning glory of his nature—that by which he is most widely separated from inferior races, and by which he bears most distinctly the image of God—is his moral freedom. This freedom is assumed and implied in the whole substance of the Christian gospel. God's revelation of Himself in Christ is distinguished from all other forms of religious belief and speculation, at once by its infinite mercy for the sinner, and by the awful sternness with which it condemns his sin. It does not regard human sin as being merely a calamity which appeals to the divine pity, but as a crime which deserves the divine condemnation. It does not regard human sin as being merely a disease which requires the exercise of the compassionate skill of the Divine Physician, but as an offence which deserves divine punishment. If, indeed, sin were only a calamity or a disease, there could be no revelation of the divine mercy in forgiving it. There would be nothing to forgive. We do not forgive men's calamities or diseases; where there is no guilt, there is no place for the exercise of mercy; and where the guilt is not great, shameful, and flagrant, the mercy which pardons it has no greatness and glory.

The Christian gospel assumes that men have sinned; that though some men are worse and some better than others, all have sinned and need the divine forgiveness.

But there can be no sin, where there is no freedom. If I condemn another man for acts of cruelty, I assume that he might have chosen to be kind. If I condemn myself for speaking ungenerous words, I assume that I was under no compulsion to speak ungenerously. I do not hold either myself or other men responsible for what was not within our choice. While listening to a great orator I may admire him, and while listening to a confused and wearisome speaker I may pity him. But I have no moral approval for the genius of the first speaker; I have no moral condemnation for the dulness of the second. It is not within a man's choice whether he will be eloquent or dull: dulness is therefore not a sin. But if a man lies, I condemn him; had he chosen, he could have told the truth.

That within limits man is free, self-determined, has been the conviction of the human race in all countries and in all times. No philosophical demonstration of the theory of Necessity has ever seriously shaken this conviction. The languages of all nations which express moral approval of actions regarded as virtuous and honourable, and moral censure of actions regarded as vicious and shameful, bear distinct and definite witness to the belief that men are free to choose between the right and the wrong; that if they choose the right they deserve to be praised, and that if they choose the wrong they deserve to be condemned. Every man is conscious that when two possible courses of action are before him—one of

which is morally better than the other—he can choose between them. This is one of those primitive facts which require no proof, are as certain as our own existence, are beyond all questioning, and must lie at the very foundation of all theories concerning human nature.

The Christian gospel in assuming that man is responsible for his sin assumes human freedom; and in assuming human freedom it can appeal for confirmation to the consciousness of the race. It assumes not only that man is free in the presence of all the forces, visible and invisible, which belong to what is called the natural order, but that he is free in the presence of God Himself; that the human will can stand erect against the Divine Will; that as man can refuse to submit to God's authority, he can also refuse to receive God's grace; that he can choose to resist the mercy of God which desires his salvation, and can stand by his choice—can stand by it, and stand by it for ever, against all the resources of the divine power and the divine love; that in these high regions mere power has no place, for if power could suppress man's freedom, man would cease to be man. Here lie the sources of all the tragedy and glory of human life and human destiny.

(II.) It has been customary to describe this freedom as the freedom of the human will; but it is assumed in the Christian gospel that man himself—not merely his will—is free.

It is assumed that there is righteousness and sin,

not only in acts of the will, but in affections and passions which the will cannot create, and which, when they exist, the will may repress but cannot destroy. There is sin, for example, not only in voluntary acts which are prompted by envy, but in envy itself, even when the will resists and tries to crush it. According to the law of the Christian life, I ought not only to relieve a man who is in distress, when it is in my power to relieve him, but to regard him with brotherly pity and compassion; if I relieve him as a matter of duty, but have no pity or compassion, my relief is wanting in the characteristic grace and beauty of Christian service. And yet, if I do not feel the compassion and the pity, I cannot by any effort of will create these affections.

The two commandments to which Christ gave the supreme place, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' are not addressed to the will, for we cannot by any volition, however energetic, create in ourselves love for either God or our neighbour; they are addressed to that which lies beneath the will and beneath all the intellectual and moral activities of human life; they are addressed to the man himself.

In these commandments, and in many others, it is assumed that whatever limits may be imposed upon him by the constitution of his physical and intellectual organisation man himself—not merely his will—is ethically and spiritually free. On the ground of that

freedom he may be required, as a duty, to love God, to reverence God, to trust God, as well as to submit his will to God's authority ; he may also be required, as a duty, to love other men, to honour them, to pity them in their sufferings, to rejoice with them in their happiness, as well as to render them voluntary acts of service.

It is only in the schools that the freedom and correlative responsibility of man are restricted to the will. The moral judgments of the race attribute to him an ampler freedom and a wider responsibility. Indeed, those noble moral affections which are independent of the will create, when expressed in acts, a far warmer and intenser moral approval than any similar acts of mere volition which are not inspired by these affections. We may have a certain measure of admiration for the man who, without any generosity, does generous things as an act of duty ; who, without any magnanimity, represses envy and jealousy, and as a matter of duty does honour to the great powers of a rival or an enemy ; who, though he has a haughty temper, is courteous because as a Christian he is under a moral obligation to be courteous ; who, though he is cold and unsympathetic and feels no real compassion for suffering, endeavours to relieve it because he knows that he ought. But our heartiest moral admiration is for the man who does generous things—not merely because it is duty to do them —but because he is generous ; who does magnanimous things because he is magnanimous ; who is courteous

because he has a kindly spirit and an inward reverence for all men; who relieves suffering—not merely in obedience to conscience—but at the impulse of a pity which will not be repressed. And this is the Christian doctrine: 'If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.'[1]

All this, I repeat, implies that man is responsible not merely for his volitions but for his affections; that man is, therefore, a free, spontaneous, self-determined force, not merely in his volitions, but in his love and hatred, his generosity and his selfishness, his reverence and his scorn, his pity for suffering and his indifference to it. Man himself—every man—is ethically and spiritually free.

IV

And yet, according to the whole strain and current of the teaching both of the Old and the New Testaments, we belong to a race and are implicated in its moral and spiritual fortunes. Indeed, in the old Jewish times, this sense of sharing the fortunes of the race became so strong as to enfeeble the sense of individual and personal responsibility. Its excess had to be corrected. Ezekiel, the great prophet of Individualism, rebuked his countrymen who attributed their sufferings, not to their own sins, but to the sins of their fathers, and who dwelt exclusively on that law of the divine order

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

under which the crimes of one generation entail loss and misery on the next. 'What mean ye,' he asked, 'that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. . . . When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.'[1] Yes: we are sure that we are free, and sure that every man will at last have to give account of *himself* to God, and that if he suffers it will be for his own sins, not for the sins of other men. God—the righteous, the personal Judge—will disentangle the intricacies of that mysterious order, which, at times, seems wholly to involve even the moral life of individual men in the life of their remote ancestors as well as of their immediate parents, in the life of their families and the life of their country, and to leave them no personal freedom. We shall suffer at last for the sins which are really our own—not for the sins of other men.

But it is also true that our life is the life of the race, and that we share the sin of the race. This is assumed in the Christian gospel. The

[1] Ezekiel xviii. 2, 3, 19, 20.

whole flock of God was lost and the Good Shepherd came to seek it. 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world,'[1] the whole world—the race, as a race—had fallen away from the divine ideal of human righteousness. There are infinite varieties in the forms which human sin assumes; and there are infinite differences in the degrees of guilt that attach to different men; but that all men have sinned, and that all men need redemption, is the assumption of the revelation of God in Christ. Every man is responsible for his sin; every man shares in the sin of the race. The two truths stand side by side. Each of them is assumed in the Christian gospel; and each of them is confirmed in human consciousness. They may seem contradictories when expressed in logical definitions, but they are comprehended in the unity of life.[2]

V

There is a strong tendency among many Christian people to attribute human sin to the original constitution of human nature. They regard body and soul as antagonistic powers and believe that the physical nature of man is necessarily hostile to what they suppose to be the perfect life. But for the body they think that the spirit of man would be filled with love for God and would achieve consummate righteousness. They speak of the body as a chain by which

[1] 1 John ii. 2.

[2] More will be found on the sin of the race in the next Discourse.

the spirit is fettered, a prison in which it is confined. As old age comes upon us, with its discomforts, its failing strength, its decay, our friends sometimes console us with the hope that through the cracks and rents of the walls of clay the light of God will have freer access to our spiritual life. No such antagonism between soul and body is suggested either by the Old Testament or the New. The theory is neither Jewish nor Christian; it is a survival of ancient forms of Pagan Philosophy The account of the creation of man in the earliest pages of the Old Testament—as I reminded you earlier in this discourse—should have saved us from this error.

According to the Hebrew and the Christian conception, man is not a Soul united to a Body, any more than he is a Body united to a Soul. It is no more true to say that the Soul is the man than to say that the Body is the man. Soul and body are the two constituents of human nature. Both are necessary to humanity. The nature of man is a complex unity.

God Himself formed the body of man; He did not find it ready to His hand, created by chance or by some inferior Power. God Himself formed it and breathed into it the breath of life. And as His great purpose was that we should love Him with all our heart and soul and strength, and keep all His commandments, it is inconceivable that the body which He formed should be necessarily and in itself hostile to perfect holiness and righteousness. The Eternal

Word—the Son of God—became flesh and dwelt among us; His body was as real as our own, and it was the instrument and organ of His perfect love for men and of His perfect obedience to the Father. If the Body is in itself evil and necessarily evil, if its strength is the weakness of the spirit and if all its senses and powers are unfriendly to goodness, why did Christ heal sickness, relieve pain, restore sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb? Why did He not let the decay and wreck of the physical life of men go on, that the spirit might be the more free to serve God?

You may say, perhaps, that the appeal to the moral perfection of our Lord is inconclusive because of His supernatural birth; that though in Him the flesh was not necessarily evil, it may be in us. Listen then to Paul. He is writing to men like ourselves: 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, . . . neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God . . . and your *members* as instruments of righteousness unto God.'[1] If the body is in itself necessarily sinful, how can its 'members be presented to God as instruments of righteousness'? Again Paul says: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.'[2] But if the body is necessarily sinful, it can never be made a holy and acceptable sacrifice; the best that we can do with it is to weaken its strength, if not to

[1] Rom. vi. 12, 13. [2] Rom. xii. 1.

destroy it. Again, he tells the Corinthians that their 'bodies are members of Christ,' they cannot therefore be necessarily sinful; and He says that sensual sin has this special aggravation, that it is a sin against a man's 'own body,' which is 'a temple of the Holy Ghost'—a sacred, a divine thing.[1]

Even in the great and blessed life beyond death, we are not to be pure spirits. When the seed is cast into the ground and dies, the mysterious life which was in it does not wholly disengage itself from body and form, and exist apart: 'God giveth it a body as it pleased Him, and to every seed a body of its own. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.'[2] What that 'spiritual body' will be we cannot tell; but, this at least seems certain, that it will be an organism through which man will be related to the new Heavens and the new Earth, and will be the perfect instrument of all his thoughts and purposes. The body will be one of the constituent elements of his glorified nature.

VI

It is not the 'body,' but the 'flesh,' that is represented in some parts of the New Testament as hostile to God and to the law of God. 'They that are in the

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 15, 18, 19. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 38, 42-44.

flesh,' says Paul, 'cannot please God.' He does not mean, he cannot mean, that they that are in the *body* cannot please God; for He goes on to say: 'But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.'[1] He was writing to men and women who were living in Rome; they were still in the body; they needed food and clothing and shelter and warmth like other men and women; they had hands and feet; some of them no doubt were suffering from disease and pain; they were still in the 'body,' but they were not in the 'flesh.'

The word 'flesh' is used with many meanings both in the Old Testament and the New. I can mention only a few of them. Sometimes it stands for the substance of a living body; sometimes for one of the the constituents of a living body, side by side with the bones and the blood; sometimes for all creatures possessing that physical life which has its seat in the flesh—as in the account of the Flood; 'All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both fowl, and cattle, and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was in the dry land, died;'[2] sometimes it stands for man generally, since flesh is one of the constituent parts of human nature; and in these instances it represents man in his frailty and mortality; 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word

[1] Roman viii. 8, 9. [2] Gen. vii. 21.

of the Lord endureth for ever';[1] sometimes, especially in the phrase 'flesh and blood,' it is used to contrast human nature with something greater than itself: after Peter's great confession our Lord said to him, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven';[2] and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when speaking of our Lord's Incarnation, says: 'Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same';[3] sometimes again it stands for human life on its earthly side, Paul says: 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God';[4] and again, after saying that it would be very far better for himself 'to depart and to be with Christ,' he adds, 'yet to abide in the flesh is more needful to you.'[5] There are other meanings, some of them more obvious, some more subtle, to which I cannot refer.[6]

It may be said briefly that it is in the power of the flesh that man lives the life of sense, the life in which he is related to the visible and material world; and so it is naturally contrasted with the spirit, in the power of which he lives the life in which he is related to God and to God's invisible and eternal kingdom. And as the flesh stands for that by which man lives his earthly life as contrasted with his life in God, it is easy to see how since man has separated himself from

[1] Isaiah xl. 6, 7, quoted 1 Pet. i. 24. [2] Matt. xvi. 17.
[3] Hebrews ii. 14. [4] Gal. ii. 20. [5] Phil. i. 24.
[6] See Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, 75-77: and Cremer *in voce.*

God, the 'flesh' may come to stand for everything in man that is hostile to God and righteousness. In itself 'the flesh'—the physical part of man's complex life—is not evil; but, in men who are no longer living in the power of the Spirit of God, the flesh stands for the sum of those evil forces in human nature which are irreconcilable to the divine will: 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.' It stands for the life of man as withdrawn from the powers of that divine kingdom to which he normally belongs.

It is necessary constantly to remember that in those passages in which the flesh is described as hostile to God, the word does not stand for the mere physical life of man, as though sin had its seat in our physical nature, but for the whole man—body and spirit—as he actually is through the power of sin. And so when Paul enumerates 'the works of the flesh' he does not speak merely of 'fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . . drunkenness, revellings, and such like,' which we should call sins of the flesh, but also of 'idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings';[1] sins which we should call sins of the spirit.

VII

Let us return to the divine image in man. Man was created in the image of God that he might achieve a most glorious righteousness. To this

[1] Gal. v. 19.

image he was destined by the very constitution of his nature. This was the divine idea which he had to fulfil. For this he was created a moral Personality with freedom, intelligence, and self-consciousness; and, as long as his Personality, freedom, intelligence, and self-consciousness remain, the constitution of his nature bears witness to the divine idea of human perfection. But man was not to achieve his perfection in the power of a separate and independent life. He cannot achieve it apart from the power of the divine life. Where the divine image is realised, there God must be.

The power of the divine life, given in Christ and by the grace and work of the Holy Spirit, has not become necessary to us because we have sinned. Man was created in the image of God that he might be capable of sharing the life of God, and apart from that life the image of God cannot, in its transcendent glory, be his; but in the power of that life, freely received, he can freely love God with all his heart and with all his mind, and with all his soul and all his strength, and his neighbour as himself, and can keep all God's commandments. This is the ultimate secret both of his moral responsibility and of his moral inability. If he cannot love God and his neighbour, it is because he has by his own self-determination excluded from his life the power of the divine life, which is necessary to his perfection. His inability remains as long as he excludes it. He can cease to exclude it, and then all things are possible to him.

Paul describes the heathen as 'alienated'—estranged —'from the life of God'; the divine life which is necessary to human righteousness had been lost by their sin, and through its loss they had become more flagrantly sinful. Only as that life is recovered is it possible for men to escape from sin and to live righteously. We are related to two worlds: each is necessary to our perfection. By the constitution of human nature, the health and vigour and joy of man's physical life are sustained by air and sunlight, and water and food; he lives his physical life in the power of the forces of the material universe; 'alienated'—separated, estranged—from the material universe, he dies. And by the constitution of human nature the health and vigour and joy of man's moral and spiritual life are sustained by the power of the life of God; 'alienated'—separated, estranged—'from the life of God,' he dies.

He dies, and yet he does not wholly die. Even before the new birth in which he is restored to fellowship with the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested in Christ, there may be clear traces, not merely in the constitution of his nature, but in his actual life, of the greatness to which he was destined. When Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Ephesians of those who are 'created in Christ Jesus,'[1] he is thinking, no doubt, of Christian men who, having repented of sin, and trusted in the infinite mercy of God, have, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, received the

[1] Eph. ii. 10.

life that is in Christ, and are living in the power of it; but that new creation in Christ would have been impossible but for their original creation in Him. In Christ, as Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Colossians, 'were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth . . . and in Him all things consist.'[1] And it is because of this original creation in Christ and this original relation to Him which human sin has not altogether destroyed, that even heathen men are not wholly ignorant of the divine will, but 'are a law unto themselves,' and 'show the work of the law written in their hearts;' and, even apart from the revelation of God through Moses or through Christ, 'do by nature the things of the law.' John declares the same truth: 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him; and apart from Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.' But still it *shines*! And that light is 'the light which lighteth every man.'[2] I decline, therefore, to speak of the virtues of the heathen as being nothing more than 'splendid sins.' To disparage them is not to do dishonour to human nature merely; it is to do dishonour to the infinite grace of God, who, though He has 'suffered the nations to walk in their own ways,' has not 'left Himself without witness,'[3] either in the

[1] Col. i. 16, 17.
[2] John i. 1-5, 9.
[3] Acts xiv. 17.

outward order of the world or in the conscience and reason of man.

Underlying the life of all men, until they have sinned unto death, and all possibility and hope of their eternal redemption are destroyed, there is another and diviner life which, by God's purpose and grace, is theirs. They may refuse to receive it; they may withdraw themselves from it; by the self-complacency of virtue as well as by flagrant sin, they may be closing up every channel through which that life can reach them. But, until they have made their final and irrevocable choice to reject the infinite goodness of God, who is eager for their salvation and perfection, the life is there. They were created to receive it and to live in the power of it, for they were created in the divine image.

Not even those who, in a most real and awful sense, are 'without God' have wholly lost their inheritance. Their vision may have become dim, and they may no longer see His glory either in earth or sky. Their hearing may have become dull, and they may no longer recognise in conscience the accent and authority of a divine voice. And yet there may be seen in some of them gracious and lofty forms of virtue. God is no longer shining in the heaven of their thought; but the splendours of the after-glow linger when the sun has set. *Their* virtue, too, is derived from God, though they know Him not. But the splendours are fading and the night is near. Only in the light and power of God can man

live righteously; and, when he has finally lost God, he has lost all his dignity and all his glory. From that doom may God in His infinite mercy save us; and that we may find salvation let us seek Him with the whole heart, and entreat Him to reveal to us the greatness of His redemption.

IX

SIN

'*Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness.*'—1 JOHN iii. 4.

'SIN is lawlessness.' John means that in every sin there is a violation of the divine law—the law which should determine, not only the acts and the words and the deliberate intentions of men, but their spirit and temper. It may be necessary for some purposes to distinguish between careless sins and deliberate sins; between sins for which some palliation may be found in the circumstances in which they were committed and sins which cannot be palliated; but to a man who considers the true nature of sin, every sin is grave, for in every sin there is lawlessness—a violation of the divine order of human life.

There is something difficult and abstract, perhaps, in this account of sin as 'lawlessness.' You will remember that in the Authorised Version the passage reads: '*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.*' The old translation, though less accurate, may seem to some of you simpler and clearer than the new.

I

'*Sin is the transgression of the law*:' this is an account of sin that a child can understand. We are born under a Law which has an absolute authority over conduct. It determines how we ought to regulate our *personal life*; and we transgress it when, for example, we are guilty of drunkenness, or of gluttony, or of indolence, or of any other sensual sins. It determines our *duty to others*, and we transgress it when we deceive other men, or treat them unjustly, harshly, or ungenerously; or when we disregard any of the obligations which arise out of the structure of human society—the mutual obligations, for example, of husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, rulers and subjects. It determines our *duty to God*, and we transgress it when we fail to reverence Him, to trust Him, to love Him, or to obey Him. All the demands of this Law, —those which relate directly to the ordering of our personal life, or to our conduct to other men, as well as those which define the duties which we owe to God Himself,—are sustained by God's authority. The Law is God's Law; and, as the old version reads: 'Sin is the transgression of the Law.' That account of sin is perfectly clear; and, as far as it goes, it is perfectly true. The awful crimes and the foul vices which darken the history of mankind—murder, adultery, nameless deeds of lust, drunkenness, lying, theft, the injustice and oppression of tyrannical governments,

the furious violence of nations in revolt, the cruelty of parents to children and of children to parents, perjury, blasphemy, profanity—all these are transgressions of the law of God; they are all sins. The men who have been guilty of them have God to reckon with. The Law they have broken is God's Law.

We ourselves have transgressed that Law. We can recall the definite acts by which we transgressed it. We have transgressed it knowingly. We have transgressed it after making solemn resolutions to obey it. Many of us, I fear, have committed the same transgressions over and over again, after we had been filled with distress by them, after we had confessed them to God and entreated Him to forgive them. If 'Sin is the transgression of the Law,' we ourselves have sinned.

II

But have we discovered the whole truth about Sin when we have learnt that it is the transgression of the Law of God?

Transgression—what is it? According to the common meaning of the word it is a definite and voluntary act. To transgress the law which requires us to speak the truth is to tell a wilful lie; to transgress the law which requires us to be honest is to commit—and to commit voluntarily—an act of dishonesty. To transgress the law which requires inward purity is voluntarily to surrender ourselves to

foul thoughts and sensual desires. This, I say, is what the word means according to its common use—it stands for a definite and voluntary act. But there are sins which are not included in this definition. It is sinful for a child not to love a parent, and for a parent not to love a child: but love is not a volition and it cannot be commanded by the will. It is sinful not to be grateful for kindness; but though a man may be ashamed of his ingratitude and feel the guilt of it, the will has no power to command gratitude. Some of the fiercest and most prolonged conflicts of the moral and spiritual life are against evil passions, which, though beaten down by the will, are not destroyed. Envy, jealousy, covetousness, suspicion and distrust, pride, vanity—all these are sinful; they are resisted by a good man because they are sinful; they could have no place in a heart perfectly free from sin; but the will, though it may prevent them from breaking out into evil words and evil deeds, cannot extinguish them. They may gradually lose their strength and at last disappear under constant repression; they may be cast out by the power and grace of Christ in answer to prayer, as the evil spirits were cast out of men during His earthly ministry; but while they remain in the heart, a man is conscious of sin and of guilt, even when the whole force of his will is being exerted to conquer them.

Human conduct is not a succession of isolated acts: it reveals certain permanent moral qualities which

constitute what we call character. There are elements of good and of evil in the very life of a man. What he says and what he does disclose what he is. He is a bad man—not only because he voluntarily says and does many wicked things, but because he himself is wicked; his very life is corrupt. He is a good man not only because he voluntarily says and does many good things, but because he himself is good; his very life is pure and just and kindly. An habitual liar is a liar, not only while he is actually telling a lie, but before and afterwards—while he is silent he is a liar as well as when he is speaking falsely—for in his very life there is an absence of reverence for the authority of truth. And so a man who is habitually truthful is truthful, not only when he is speaking the truth under strong temptation to speak falsely, but before he has spoken and afterwards: for in his very life there is an intolerance of falsehood. There is sin and there is righteousness, not merely in acts which are voluntarily done, in words which are voluntarily spoken, in thoughts and feelings which are voluntarily permitted to take possession of the mind and heart, but also in the very elements of our life. No doubt this is a great mystery. Life is known to us only in its activities; and I suppose that we are wholly unable to conceive how the moral and spiritual life can have a vicious taint in it, or how it can have in it qualities which can be described as good and virtuous. But we are certain of the fact for which the words stand; and every conception of sin is fatally defective

in which this fact does not hold a large place. There is sin and there is righteousness in what we are, as well as in what we do.

III

It may, however, be contended that all a man's sin may be ultimately traced to his will, because what he is to-day is the result of all that he has voluntarily thought and felt and said and done in past years. If to-day he has a covetousness which his will can check but cannot expel from his heart, it is because he has allowed himself for many years to think too much of money and to care too much for it, and has not voluntarily encouraged the spirit of generosity. To-day he can no more rid himself of vanity, or jealousy, or suspicion by an act of the will than he can rid himself of some bodily disease by an act of the will, but it is because, in past years, he has voluntarily yielded to vanity, to jealousy, or to suspicion. The evil passions which have acquired such enormous strength that they defy all his efforts to extinguish them have become strong by his own consent; he might have quenched their fires years ago, but he voluntarily allowed them to burn more and more fiercely; he fed the flames; and therefore, though they are now beyond the control of his will, he is responsible for them.

In this there is a very large measure of truth, and the truth is of immense importance in relation to self-discipline and the formation of character; but it is not the whole of the truth. For is it not certain

that the vices and imperfections of parents and of still remoter ancestors reappear in their children and descendants? Are not men so born that if they are to live a good life some will have to fight hard against tendencies to drunkenness, some against tendencies to gluttony, some against tendencies to indolence, some against tendencies to still graver forms of sensuality? Are there not men who may be described as constitutionally cowardly, so that when a lie promises to save them from trouble they find it hard to tell the truth? Are there not others who are constitutionally cold, selfish, and suspicious? Others who are constitutionally vain? Others who are constitutionally proud? Others who by some fatal fault of nature seem incapable of pity? Others who inherit a temper which makes them tyrannical and cruel? Whatever explanation we may give of these mysterious facts, are not the facts too obvious and certain to be doubted?

Many of us can remember that tendencies to certain forms of sin appeared in our childhood—appeared before our conscience was sufficiently developed to condemn them as evil; and against these very tendencies we have had to maintain a conflict for years. Through God's grace we may have mastered them at last; but they had to be mastered, or we should have been ruined for ever. They were, therefore, evil—very evil. They were not temptations which came upon us from without; they were part of our very life. We were born with them.

Under the law of heredity the definite moral evils which are constitutionally present in parents are transmitted—we cannot tell how—to children and to children's children. I am not sure that the word 'transmitted' accurately represents the facts; it may, I cannot tell. We are, perhaps, on surer ground when we say that the definite moral evils which are constitutionally present in the parents *reappear* in the children. Families have their characteristic vices and their characteristic virtues. Sometimes, indeed, a generation escapes the taint, and it appears in the next. But even when there are great moral contrasts between different branches of the same stock it is often possible to discover that their character has a common root, and that the contrasts are due to accidental differences of condition and environment. There is what may be described as a community of moral life between those who have descended from the same ancestors; for good as well as for evil they are one. And so we say that certain vices or certain virtues run in the blood of particular families. In other words, qualities—whether good or evil—which belong to the very life of a man are derived, in part at least, from his parents; they are not wholly the result of his own volitions.

It may be objected that if in any sense a man derives any of his moral qualities from his parents he is not responsible for them; but I do not find that we regard the truthfulness, the justice, and the gene-

rosity of a man with diminished admiration or honour, if we discover that his father and his grandfather, and his great-grandfather before him, were truthful, just, and generous; nor do I find that if a man is hard, selfish, grasping, tyrannical, merciless, our moral condemnation of him is diminished by the discovery that these vices disgraced the long line of his ancestors. We make very large allowance for men whose *circumstances* have been against them, for men who, in their childhood and youth, lived among coarse, reckless, immoral people, who had hardly a chance of knowing their duty, who breathed a poisonous moral atmosphere from their birth; but we make no such allowance for men whose vices are the expression of their own life, and not, in any sense, the almost inevitable results of their circumstances.

A vice like drunkenness, which, in some extreme cases, appears to be a physical disease as well as a vice, and which may, perhaps, admit of cure by physical remedies, may be judged mercifully; the man who inherits from drunken parents an almost unconquerable physical craving for drink may be pitied, as we pity a man who inherits a weak heart or weak lungs. But reckless and unscrupulous ambition, intense selfishness, lying, and other sins of the spirit—for these, we regard a man with no pity, even though it is notorious that his fathers, through four or five generations, have been guilty of the same vices. It is enough that he himself is wickedly reckless in

pursuit of greatness, that he himself is hard-hearted, that he himself is a liar; whatever his ancestors may have been, we condemn him for his own crimes.

Nor do I believe that when the moral life is quickened and the conscience awakened, and a man discovers the evil of sins of this description, his condemnation of himself is at all lessened by his knowledge that the sins of which he is guilty are the sins of which his fathers were guilty. I appeal, not to those of you who are morally careless—for you are not judges on these questions—but to those of you who are earnestly endeavouring to live a righteous and Christian life. The sins into which you are sometimes betrayed are, perhaps, the very sins which you remember in your father or your mother. The moral weaknesses of which you are conscious were the moral weaknesses which you saw in one or other of your parents when you were children. The evil temper or disposition which mars your life is the very temper or disposition which marred their life. Your sins, your moral weaknesses, your evil temper were theirs as well as yours. But does your conscience, for this reason, condemn you for them less sternly? Do you, for this reason, feel less humiliation, less shame, less self-reproach when you entreat God to be merciful to you and to grant you forgiveness? On the contrary, are there not some of you, at least, to whom it seems that it is precisely in these sins, in these weaknesses, in these evil dispositions, that you find the last and most decisive proofs of your own

sinfulness? Other moral failures may, perhaps, be in some sense the result of accidental circumstances. These are the certain indications of deeply-rooted moral evil; they are the proof that your very life is corrupt.

IV

I have spoken of the community of moral life which exists between members of the same family—descendants of the same parents—and which is illustrated in the appearance and reappearance through successive generations of the same virtues and the same vices. Is there not also a community of moral life between all mankind? And does not the common life of the race include a certain 'lawlessness' which is impatient of the supreme authority of God and resents His grace—a lawlessness which is sometimes at first vividly revealed, though afterwards subdued, by the Christian Gospel?

The experiences of those who have found in Christ the Son of God and the Lord and Saviour of men are, indeed, infinitely varied. Sometimes, as soon as the great discovery is made, it inspires perfect faith and perfect submission, and there follows an instantaneous sense of restoration to God; I have seen the face of a man, troubled and distressed at one moment, filled the next with a sudden glory. But in other cases there is a prolonged agony before the soul finds rest, life, and peace in Christ. There is a self-assertion which refuses to receive eternal salvation as the free gift of God's grace, and which revolts

against the personal authority of God. The man knows that he ought to receive the grace and to submit to the authority; but at the very centre of his life there is a hostile force which resists the authority and rejects the grace. He is conscious that it is he himself—and not another—that resists and rejects. The powers which are acting upon him to produce submission and trust—powers which he welcomes and whose victory he longs for and prays for—are divine; the resistance and the rejection, I say, are his own, and he knows it. The very freedom and glory of the divine grace fill him with despair. What must be the malignity of the sinfulness which refuses this wonderful redemption—a redemption achieved by the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of God's eternal Son! He says that he '*cannot*' receive the divine grace and that he '*cannot*' submit to the divine authority. '*Cannot*'—and yet, while he pleads that he 'cannot,' he is conscious that this is the supreme and damning proof of his guilt.

This awful discovery of the evil which has corrupted the very springs of life is sometimes made long after a man has really begun to serve God. There are many persons who have sincerely trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation, who love Him and are honestly desiring to do His will, but who have the most imperfect conception of the nature of Christian righteousness. Their morals are the traditional morals of the people of their country and their class, with some slight modifications and

corrections suggested by the traditions of the Church with which they are associated. There are wide provinces of their life over which the will of Christ has no authority. Many of His precepts are wholly forgotten. Others are regarded as 'counsels of perfection,'—intended for elect saints, and imposing no obligation on ordinary Christian men. But sometimes, to Christian people who have been living an easy and self-complacent life—a life without any gross sins, but without any of the intensity and energy which are inspired by a true conception of the perfection to which we are called in Christ—there comes a great moral and spiritual crisis. There is an experience under the Gospel which is analogous to Paul's experience under the Law: 'I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.'[1] The endeavour to do the will of God perfectly—to bring the whole of conduct, or indeed any considerable part of it under His authority—results in the discovery, that in the obscure depths of the inward life there is an appalling antagonism to God's will. Resolutions are formed to forsake sins which had not previously been regarded as seriously sinful; and, almost as soon as they are formed, they are broken. Attempts are made—earnest and vehement attempts—to discharge duties which had not previously been regarded as obligatory, and, though renewed again and again, they are defeated. In some happy hour a

[1] Rom. vii. 9.

great passion of love for God is kindled in the heart, and there is exulting hope that in the power of it all righteousness will become possible; but before the day is over, its fires are extinguished. The miserable man dwells on 'the exceeding great and precious promises' of the divine grace, recalls all that he has ever heard of the power of the truth and of the Spirit of God, appeals earnestly to Christ who came to preach deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; but he is terrified by the consciousness that he is still held fast by some evil power, and that freedom has not come. It is he himself who is at fault, and, while these awful experiences last, it sometimes seems to him that deliverance is impossible. If the tyranny that held him were altogether an alien power, then indeed he might escape; or he might be liberated by the grace of God; but in his anguish it seems to him that he would cease to be himself if he ceased to be sinful. He exclaims, not in order to palliate his guilt, but to express his full sense of its enormity: 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.'[1]

V

What explanation is to be given of these fierce agonies and terrible conflicts? And how are we to account for the common experience of ordinary men who know nothing of the darker tragedies of the

[1] Psalm li. 5.

moral life, but who are conscious every day of the infirmity of their better purposes, and who exclaim with Paul: 'to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.'[1] Is it possible to resist the conviction that there is present in the very life of man a force, a tendency, a bias, an element—call it what you will—hostile to righteousness? Can any other explanation be given of the fact that in all countries and in all ages men have failed to illustrate the divinely ordained order of life? The virtues and the vices of mankind have assumed a great variety of forms—forms determined partly by differences in what seems to have been the original constitution of particular races, partly by differences in the material conditions of men, by differences in their intellectual development, differences in their political and social institutions, differences in their religious beliefs and discipline; but always and everywhere, according to the testimony of poets, historians, moralists, and the founders of the great historical religions, men have failed to live the perfect life. The sense of failure has been most intense, where the consciousness of personality and of moral freedom has been most vivid, and the ideal of goodness the noblest. Men have confessed that they saw and honoured the better life, but did not live it. 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;' this does not rest on the authority of a Christian apostle merely; history bears witness

[1] Rom. vii. 19.

to it; and whenever a man's conscience becomes vigorous and keen, conscience condemns him and says, Thou too art a sinner. There is a mysterious community of moral life between men of all countries and all ages. Individual men cannot stand absolutely alone and apart—isolated from the life of the rest of mankind. Within limits every man is morally free, but we are members one of another; and in the life which is shared by the whole race, whatever other and nobler elements there may be—and there are many—there is a power which makes for unrighteousness.

This is what theologians mean when they speak of the race as a fallen race. The race itself has fallen—not merely individual men; and from this fall the race needs redemption.

VI

When we consider the immense importance which, in theological systems, is attributed to the sin of Adam and to the effects of that sin in the physical, moral, and spiritual ruin of his descendants, there is something surprising in the inconsiderable place which is given to Adam in the Holy Scriptures. There is the story of his creation, and of his sin, and of his expulsion from the garden of Eden, in the second and third chapters of the book of Genesis; and in the fifth, it is said that 'Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image; and called his name Seth;' which has been interpreted as meaning that Seth inherited those imperfections of

Adam's nature which had resulted from his fall, although the true sense seems to be that Adam transmitted to his child that likeness to God which he himself[1] had received in his creation; but there is not a solitary passage in all the rest of the Old Testament which, can, by any pressure, be made to suggest that the sin of Adam inflicted any injury of any kind on his descendants. Only twice indeed is the sin of Adam referred to at all: once in Job (xxxi. 33) where Job protests that he had not 'like Adam' covered his transgressions by hiding his iniquity in his bosom; and once in Hosea (vi. 7) in which the prophet declares that Ephraim and Judah 'like Adam' have transgressed the Covenant.

In the New Testament Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, attributes the physical death of all men to Adam as he attributes the resurrection of all to Christ: 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. xv. 22); and, in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he illustrates the transcendent glory of the redemption resulting from the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ by contrasting it with the results of the disobedience of Adam. The passage in Romans is one of immense importance as well as of great difficulty; and, whatever uncertainty there may be about the precise meaning of particular sentences and particular clauses, it indicates very clearly that Paul believed that the sin of Adam had brought vast evils on the human race just as the righteousness of

[1] See *ante*, p. 177.

Christ had brought infinite blessings. But even in this passage—the critical passage on the doctrine—the account of the evil results of Adam's sin is incidental; Paul speaks of Adam's transgression and of the effects of it, not for the sake of giving an explanation of human sin, but for the sake of illustrating the greatness of the Christian salvation. In no other part of the New Testament is this relation between the sin of Adam and the moral and spiritual condition of mankind spoken of. Our Lord never speaks of it: nor does Peter; nor does John; nor does Paul himself except in the passages to which I have referred.[1]

What the Gospel assumes, and what is insisted upon throughout the New Testament, is the fact that men are actually sinners—all men; that the race has fallen away from God and needs redemption. It is assumed that all men need the infinite mercy of God for the forgiveness of their sins. It is declared that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that apart from the divine life which is given in the new birth no man can have a place in the kingdom of God. The universality of human sin is assumed; about the mystery of its origin, except in the single passage in the Romans, the New Testament is silent.

But explain it how we will, it remains true that we share the life of the race as the branches share the life of the tree, and that in this life there is an evil power which must be resisted and overcome if we are to do the will of God. The question whether

[1] Note W.

we are guilty merely because we share the life, or whether all our guilt lies in yielding to the evil power which is present in it, is one which it is not necessary to resolve; for we have all yielded to it, and have done evil things innumerable, which we might have left undone. Having yielded to it, we have become confederates with the evil power which is working in all men against the authority and the grace of God. There are times when in addition to the burden of my personal transgressions I seem to share the responsibility of that 'fall of man' which has 'brought death into the world and all our woe.' There are times when I cannot think of the sins, even the grossest sins, of other men, as though I were wholly free from the guilt of them; for, as I have said, we share a common life; there is a solidarity of the race in sin; and when I condemn other men, there are times when I feel that I am condemning myself; for we are all members one of another.

On this awful subject it is supremely necessary that we should be sincere with ourselves and sincere with each other. The Christian Gospel has absolutely no meaning or power apart from the assumption that men have sinned. I have received the Gospel myself because I know that I have sinned. I preach it because I know that other men have sinned. The Christian Gospel assumes that sin is not merely a transitory and inevitable stage of imperfection in the moral development of mankind: that it is not the necessary result of the physical and social conditions

into which we are all born. It is wholly abnormal—not a part of the orderly evolution of the universe. There is something awful in it—something mysterious. The guilt of every act of sin that we commit attaches to each one of us—separately and apart: it is our personal defiance of the authority of God; and yet, in some terrible way, we are implicated in the sin of the race.

But, thank God, if we share the sin of the race we also share its redemption. The race was created in the Eternal Son of God and was destined in Him to eternal perfection and eternal joy, nor has the divine purpose been finally thwarted by human sin. If, as members of a race which has fallen away from God, we are born to an inheritance of appalling evils, as members of a race which has the roots of its life in the Eternal Son of God, we are also born to an inheritance of infinite glory. The whole race has sinned, but its sin has been atoned for; Christ is the Propitiation for the sin of the world. There is an evil power in the life of the race—a great and awful power, which if unresisted will destroy us; but the grace of God in Christ is infinitely mightier to redeem and to save. We are born to that redemption—to that salvation; it lies with each one of us to determine whether we will receive or reject it. If we are finally lost it will not be because we belong to a sinful race but because we have rejected the infinite mercy of God which has achieved the redemption of the race in Christ.

X

THE ATONEMENT (I)

'*Christ died for our sins.*'—1 COR. xv. 3.

THAT the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord and Saviour of the human race is the common faith of all Christians; but there are two different conceptions of the method by which He accomplishes our salvation. The difference between them may be expressed, roughly and in an exaggerated form, by saying that, according to one conception, Christ achieves our redemption by revealing God's love to us, and that, according to the other, He reveals God's love to us by achieving our redemption.

I say that this is a rough and exaggerated account of the difference between two conceptions of the Christian salvation; but it seems to me substantially accurate. According to both conceptions, the Divine Word which has come to the race in and through Christ is charged with powers of life. For, according to both conceptions, the supreme appeal of God to the conscience, the heart, the reason, and the will of man, has been made through Christ. In Christ, according to both conceptions, God has revealed to us whatever can solicit or command our submission

to His authority, our reverence for His righteousness, our trust and joy in His love. In the Incarnation of Christ, according to both conceptions, we discover the infinite possibilities of human perfection, for the Incarnation reveals the kinship between our own life and the life of God. In the Death of Christ, according to both conceptions, we discover the infinite strength and depth of the divine love: 'God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'[1] According to both conceptions, therefore, we are saved by the revelation of God in Christ; that revelation is the great force by which God draws us to Himself, and enables us to live the life for which He created us.

But—to recur to the form in which I have already expressed the rough contrast between two opposed conceptions of the Christian method of salvation—does Christ redeem us by revealing God, or does He reveal God by redeeming us?

Take, for example, the Incarnation. Does the Incarnation *itself* do anything to redeem us? Does it bring God and man nearer to each other, before man knows anything of it? Or does the *whole* power of it consist in what it reveals to man of the kinship between himself and the Eternal? Take, again, the Death of our Lord. Does the Death itself do anything to redeem us? does it affect and determine the relations between God and man, before man knows that Christ died for him? Or does the *whole*

[1] Rom. v. 8.

power of it consist in what it reveals to man of the divine love? That the knowledge of God given us in Christ is one of the great factors in human redemption is true; and it is a truth on which it is necessary to insist with great earnestness; but is the knowledge of God the only factor?

Perhaps I can make the issue plainer by an illustration. I have a son who has been ruined by living a reckless and wicked life; and, though my love for him is unquenched, his heart is bitter against me, and he has lost all confidence in my affection because I refuse to furnish him with the means of indulging his vices. I am the only friend that can help him to escape from his wretchedness, and to return to a life of virtue and honour; it is of critical importance to him that his confidence in me should be restored. I hear that he has reached the last extremity of misery; he is utterly destitute; he is suffering from a disease which threatens to end fatally and to end soon; he is left in his pain and poverty, friendless and uncared for. His life is in peril; my *first* and *immediate object must be to save him from dying*. I go to him myself; I find him insensible; he remains insensible for many days; I watch him day and night; I send for a physician; I engage a nurse; I provide him with food; I pay and dismiss his creditors who come clamouring for money. When he recovers consciousness I soothe his restlessness; as his strength increases, I endeavour to interest him in the pursuits

which had a charm for him in other and happier days; when he is able to travel, I take him to the sea, and remain with him until health and vigour begin to return.

My love for him is revealed in what I do and endure for his physical recovery; and the love so revealed may, at last, rekindle his affection for me, and lead him to give up his evil ways. But the physical recovery, which is my immediate anxiety, is one thing; the moral effect of the love for him which I show in all that I do for his physical recovery is quite another thing. It is not by revealing my love for him that I save his life; it is in saving his life that I reveal my love. The illustration is far from being an adequate one; but, perhaps, it will help to make clearer one of the principal contentions of this discourse—that God does not redeem us merely by revealing His love, but that He reveals His love by redeeming us. The revelation comes through the redemption.

The two conceptions of the Death of Christ, which look so like each other, are really very different. According to one conception Christ revealed the divine love by dying for us; and the revelation of the love, in its power over our heart and life—this alone—redeems us. According to the other conception Christ redeemed us by dying for us, and by so redeeming us revealed the divine love; the death itself was a great factor in our redemption as well as the love which it reveals.

I

In this discourse I shall endeavour to show that in Christ 'we have our redemption through His blood,'[1] because His death, while it is a most wonderful and pathetic revelation of the love of God for the human race, is the ground or condition of God's forgiveness of human sin.

It is with the Fact itself that the Death of Christ is the ground or condition of the Divine Forgiveness that I have to deal this morning—not with any explanation or theory of the Fact. The objections which have been raised against the Atonement for sin which our Lord consummated on the cross have been, for the most part, objections to the explanations of the Atonement which have been attributed to theologians. Try to recall the discussions on this subject to which you have listened, or which you have come across in contemporary literature, and you will discover, I think, that, in most of them, there has been no investigation of the question whether, as a matter of fact, Christ died for the sins of men, and whether, as a matter of fact, 'we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,'[1] but there has been a vigorous and perhaps successful assault on some theological theory which attempts to explain the connection between the Death of Christ and the Forgiveness of sin; and because the objections to a

[1] Eph. i. 7.

theory or explanation of the Fact may be valid, or may appear to be valid, many inconsiderate persons proceed to reject the Fact itself.

In every other province of human thought we ascertain the Facts first—make sure of *them*—and try to explain them afterwards. We never deny the Facts because we find them inexplicable. Some of the Facts about which we are most certain and with which we are most familiar cannot be explained. We cannot, for example, explain why we see a mountain when the image of it is formed on the retina; or why we hear a voice when vibrations are produced in the ear by the percussion of atmospheric waves. Between the image on the retina and vision, between the vibrations in the ear and sound, there is a gulf which no speculation has ever been able to cross. The two classes of phenomena—the impression on the physical organ, on the one hand, and consciousness on the other—are so remote from each other, so unlike, that the relation between them cannot be traced. It may be that we shall find ourselves unable to give any account of the relation between the Death of Christ and the Forgiveness of sin; and yet the Fact that the Death of Christ is the ground of Forgiveness may be so certain to us as to be a great power in life.

I am only saying the same thing in other words when I remind you that if the conception of the Atonement which you think is held by your Christian friends, or which you think that you have heard illustrated or implied in a hundred sermons, or which

you think that you find in the writings of famous theologians, or which I may attempt to state in a future discourse, seems to you altogether untenable, you are not at liberty to conclude that Christ did not die for the sins of men, or that you do not receive remission of sin through His Death; after you have rejected all theories you have still to consider the question—Is it a Fact that the Death of Christ is the condition and ground of the Forgiveness of sins? This is the question which I have now to consider.

II

How are we to determine whether Christ died for the sins of men and whether His object in dying was that we might receive the remission of sins?

We must appeal, in the first place, to Christ Himself. He declared that He was under no compulsion to die, but that He was about to lay down His life of His own free will. 'No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of myself.'[1] He must have known for what purpose He laid it down; and for us His authority is final. On a question like this, we may also appeal with confidence to His apostles—to the men whom He charged with the duty of making known His Gospel to all nations. For the purposes of this inquiry I do not claim infallibility for the apostles or inspiration. They were to preach 'repentance and remission of sin,'

[1] John x. 18.

first to the Jews and then to the heathen ; it was for this purpose that He suffered and rose again.[1] That men were to receive through Christ the remission of sins, was therefore part of the very substance of their Gospel. It is inconceivable that they should have taught that the Death of Christ was the ground and condition of the remission of sins unless they had learnt it from Him.

To quote the passages from the four Gospels and from the apostolic epistles which explicitly affirm that Christ died for us, that He died for our sins, and that through His Death we have the remission of sins gives no adequate impression of the great place which the fact of the Atonement held in the thought and life both of our Lord Himself and of the apostles. 'That the apostles regarded the Death of Christ as a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the sins of the world appears in many passages which yield no direct testimony to the doctrine. It sometimes determines the form of an elaborate argument, which falls to pieces if this truth is denied. At other times it gives pathos and power to a practical appeal. It accounts for some of the misconceptions and misrepresentations of apostolic teaching. It explains the absence from the apostolic writings of very much that we should have found in them if the apostles had not believed that for Christ's sake, and not merely because of the effect on our hearts of what Christ has revealed, God grants us remission of sins. It penetrates the whole substance of their theological and ethical teaching,

[1] Luke xxiv. 46.

and is the very root of their religious life.'[1] And the truth is implicated in the history of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded by the four evangelists as well as expressly declared in some of His most memorable sayings.

But within the limits of a single discourse it is impossible to attempt the larger and more thorough investigation of the New Testament writings which is suggested by these considerations; I cannot do more than remind you of some of the principal passages, in which the constituent elements of the doctrine of the Atonement are explicitly asserted.

(I.) In a considerable number of passages it is said that Christ died for us, died for all, laid down His life for us. These phrases, if we were not so familiar with them, would startle us. Neither in the Old Testament nor the New is it said of any other great religious teacher that he died either for all men or for the Jewish race, or for those who through His teaching endeavoured to do the will of God. But the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said that 'the Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many.'[2] His language would have a far more vivid meaning for those who heard it than it has for ourselves. Slaves were ransomed or redeemed by the price which was paid for their liberation; and our Lord declared that it was by giving His life for men that He was to

[1] *The Atonement: The Congregational Union Lecture for* 1875 (Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London), pp. 25, 26.

[2] Matt. xx. 28.

redeem them. He said again: 'I lay down my life for the sheep,' 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.'[1] His Death, to which His disciples were looking forward with terror, was to be the supreme proof of His love for them; He was about to lay down His life for *them*. Peter says: 'Christ also suffered, . . . the Righteous for the unrighteous.'[2] Paul, in one of the earliest of his epistles—the first to the Thessalonians—writes: 'God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us.'[3] In the Epistle to the Romans, written some years later, he says: 'Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'[4] John points to the Death of Christ for us as the great, the supreme manifestation of Love; he writes as if, apart from that Death, we should not have known the real nature and power and glory of love: 'Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'[5]

If these passages mean nothing more than that in His Death, as in all His teaching and all the gracious acts of His ministry, His heart was set on serving and

[1] John x. 15; xv. 13, 14. [2] 1 Peter iii. 18.
[3] 1 Thess. v. 9, 10. [4] Rom. v. 6-8. [5] 1 John iii. 16.

saving the human race; that He died as He had lived 'for us,' it is at least remarkable that the apostles never say that Christ '*lived* for us,' '*hungered* for us,' '*thirsted* for us,' 'was *wearied* for us,' 'was *tempted* for us'; but only that He '*suffered*' or '*died*,' or '*laid down His life* for us.' Why was it that the phrase was used of His Death, but not of any of the great things which, during His active life, He said and did and endured for the sake of restoring men to God and to righteousness?

(II.) The meaning of such passages as these I have quoted is made more definite by passages in which Christ is said to have died for our *sins*.

Paul, writing to the Galatians, says that our Lord Jesus Christ 'gave Himself for our sins'; writing to the Romans, that He 'was delivered up for our trespasses'; writing to the Corinthians, that He 'died for our sins.'[1] Peter says that He 'suffered for our sins.'[2] These passages teach that the Death of Christ was in some sense the result of human sin; that it was on account of human sin that He died. They define more closely the meaning of these passages in which it is said that Christ died 'for us.'

It may however be suggested that the real intention of passages like these was to declare that Christ died to deliver us from sin and to make us righteous. If this was what the apostles meant it is surprising that they did not say it in clear and unambiguous words. In ordinary human speech, to

[1] Gal. i. 4; Rom. iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 3. [2] 1 Pet. i. 18.

suffer for a crime means to endure the penalty, or at least the natural results, of a crime; and the suffering may come upon a man either through his own wrong-doing or the wrong-doing of other men. And when it is said that Christ suffered or died for our sins, the natural and obvious sense of the words is that the evil consequences of our sins came upon Him although He was sinless.

(III.) And that the obvious sense is the real sense, is shown decisively by a third class of passages. Peter, in order to give force to his precept to slaves to endure patiently reproach and suffering for offences of which they were not guilty, appeals to the example of Christ 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.'[1] Our sins were laid upon Him as a burden, and that burden He carried up to the cross on which He died. Paul, in an intensely rhetorical passage, speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as if in some awful and inconceivable way He had been completely identified with the sin of the race: 'Him who knew no sin'—could not know it—'God made sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.'[2]

(IV.) Christ 'died for us,' 'died for our sins,' 'carried up our sins in His own body to the tree,' 'was made sin for us'; and the end for which He suffered is declared by our Lord Himself to be the remission of our sins: 'This is My blood of the Covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins.'[3] The same

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [2] 2 Cor. v. 21. [3] Matt. xxvi. 28.

great truth is asserted by Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians: 'We have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.'[1] He reasserts it in another form in the Epistle to the Romans: 'Being now justified'—liberated from condemnation on account of our sins—'by His blood, much more shall we be saved from the wrath of God'—the final revelation of the wrath of God against sin—'through Him.'[2] And since the death of Christ is the ground of the remission of sins, Christ Himself is described by John as 'the Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the whole world.'[3] He says again, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins.'[4]

If you heartily receive the great words of Christ that His blood was 'shed unto the remission of sins'; if with the apostles you believe that your sins were a burden which He carried up to the cross; that He died for you, died for your sins, suffered for your sins; if you trust in Him as the Propitiation for your sins; if you believe that 'through His blood' you have 'the forgiveness of sins'; that 'by His blood' you are released from the divine condemnation for your sins and are 'justified'; then, although you may be wholly unable to discover any relation between human sin and the Death of Christ and between

[1] Eph. i. 7. [2] Rom. v. 9.
[3] 1 John ii. 2. [4] 1 John iv. 10.

the Death of Christ and the Divine Forgiveness of sin, you receive the great and awful and glorious Fact of which every doctrine and theory of the Atonement can be nothing more than an inadequate explanation.

III

The passages which I have quoted appear to me to be a decisive and final proof that, in the belief of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and of His original apostles, there is a direct relation between human sin and the Death of our Lord, and between the Death of our Lord and the Divine Forgiveness of sin; they declare that the sins of men were the cause of the Death and that the Death is the ground of the Forgiveness. I can imagine no other terms in which the Fact of the Atonement could have been more clearly or more firmly asserted.

This was a large part of that original gospel by which vast numbers of men were in the course of two generations drawn from heathenism to the true God, and from gross and flagrant vices to the life illustrated in the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. It was among the elementary truths which formed part of the earliest statements of the Christian Gospel to heathen men; it was not reserved as a mystery for philosophers and theologians: 'I delivered unto you *first of all* that which also I received,

how that Christ *died for our sins* according to the Scriptures.'[1] This was what Paul said to the church which he had founded at Corinth; to every other church that he had founded he could have said the same. Peter and John and the rest of the original apostles preached the same gospel.

Through all the corruptions which have enfeebled the faith and dishonoured the morals of the Church, this truth, though often obscured, has never been dislodged from its place and authority in Christian thought. Theologians have given varying and conflicting explanations of it, but its power over the hearts of the faithful has been unbroken. Scholars like Augustine, 'affrighted' with their 'sins' and the 'burden of their misery,' have received courage and hope when they have discovered that 'One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live unto themselves but unto Him, who for their sakes died and rose again.'[2] The same truth has filled the hearts of countless millions of obscure men with wonder and joy, and has saved them from despair. In famous religious revivals it has been one of the great 'powers' of the kingdom of God; it has softened remorse for sin into penitence, and transfigured the fear of God's judgments into a happy trust in His grace. The cross has become the symbol of the Christian Faith. The Lord's Supper, at which through generation after generation Christian men

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3. [2] Augustine, *Confessions* x. 76.

'proclaim the Lord's Death till He come,'[1] has been in every country and in every age the most sacred service of the Christian Church.

Under the power of a passionate and imaginative faith, which alone rendered the doctrine of Transubstantiation credible, men have discovered in the Bread and the Wine on the altar, the Body and the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have offered them to God as a sacrifice for sin. The very corruptions which have gathered round the service are a pathetic and impressive witness to the transcendent mystery of the Death which it commemorates, and to its unique power over the life of the Church.

That the Death of Christ was a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and that through the blood of Christ we have the forgiveness of sins has been *verified* in the actual experience of the Christian Church. Nothing is more real than the sense of guilt; and there have been multitudes of men who have been filled with anguish by it. They have found no relief, while they endeavoured to increase the bitterness of their sorrow for sin. They have attempted to amend their lives, to keep out of the reach of temptation, and to obey all God's commandments; but the dreadful shadow still rested so heavily upon them that their hearts were chilled, and there was no buoyancy or hopefulness in their well-doing. They prayed—sometimes with passionate earnestness—but God seemed far away. They had sinned; it

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 26.

seemed as if no power on earth or in heaven could break the iron chain which bound them to their sins.

At last they saw that Christ had died for their sins; and then the shadow broke and passed away; the light of God shone upon them: they knew that they were forgiven. It is a wonderful experience. No one who has not passed through it can imagine its blessedness. It is an experience that seems impossible until it is actually known; and then the reality of it is one of the great certainties of life. When I discover that I am forgiven I still condemn my sin—condemn it, perhaps, more sternly than ever; I see that it was inexcusable; I abhor it as I may never have abhorred it before; I may feel as I had never felt, that it justly provoked the divine 'indignation and wrath'; but when I approach God through Christ as the Propitiation for my sin, the guilt of it crushes me no longer; God is at peace with me; I have perfect rest in His love.

It is not merely at the commencement of the Christian life that the Death of Christ has this wonderful power. Its power endures. Day after day, year after year, when we are troubled by the consciousness of moral failure and of ill desert, we find in the death of Christ for our sin power to trust in the divine mercy, and to implore the divine forgiveness with an absolute confidence that we shall receive it. Indeed, in this country and in our own times, I suppose that there are large numbers of Christian people to whom the discovery of what

the Death of Christ has achieved for them comes long after their first endeavours to live the Christian life. At first their sense of guilt is superficial and ineffective; and they appeal to God through Christ, not so much for the forgiveness of past sins as for the power to resist and master temptation to sin in the time to come. They receive, in more or less ample measure, what they sought. But their repeated failures to live the perfect life create in them a consciousness of their guilt as well as of their weakness; and they appeal to God for the mercy which pardons sin, as well as for the grace which strengthens them for righteousness. Then they discover the great mystery which a generation or two ago was usually discovered as soon as men began to care with any seriousness for their eternal salvation—the mystery that Christ is not only the strength of our righteousness but the Propitiation for our sins; and the discovery adds immeasurably to the peace, the joy, the freedom, and the power of their Christian life.

Objections to the Atonement
not
I Was Atonement needed & for?
based on assumption
① Relation of God & Man
② for forgiveness of sin & Man
③ Maintenance of Divine Justice
II Injustice in allowing innocent to suffer for guilty
Vicarious remedial suffering in Nature - Human Nature
III Non-consciousness of guilty Sin XI

ATONEMENT (II)

'In whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.'—EPH. i. 7.

IN the preceding discourse I endeavoured to show that according to the teaching of our Lord Himself and of His apostles the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ has a direct relation to the Forgiveness of human sin; that in some sense the Death is the ground or condition of Forgiveness. I also appealed to the experience of Christian people of all ages and of all Churches as a confirmation of this truth. Before attempting to offer any explanation of this great mystery, it may be well to consider what, I suppose, are the deepest and strongest and commonest objections to it. I will state these objections in plain, rough, popular language.

I

It is said that when men sin against *us* and are sorry for it, we forgive them without asking for any 'atonement'; it is enough that they express their regret for their offence. In many cases, indeed, we

forgive men who neither acknowledge nor feel that they have wronged us. We do not allow the wrong to quench our old affection for them, or to prevent us from rendering them all the kindly offices of friendship. In this merciful conduct we are but obeying the commandments of Christ and His apostles: 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.'[1] 'Avenge not yourselves . . . If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'[2] Can we believe that God requires *us* to show a greater magnanimity, a more generous love, a freer mercy to those who sin against *us* than He shows to those who sin against Himself? *We* forgive without asking for an 'atonement'; surely His goodness is infinitely greater than ours; it is not conceivable that He should ask for an 'atonement' as the condition of Forgiveness.

Need of Atonement

This objection rests on two assumptions, neither of which can be maintained.

(I.) It assumes, first of all, that God's moral relations to men, and to the sins of men, are identical with our own; and that, therefore, what it is right for us to do, must be right for Him to do, and that what it would be wrong for us to do would be wrong for Him to do. This assumption has been definitely expressed in the lines of a well-known poet:

> 'But nothing can be good in Him,
> Which evil is in me.'[3]

[1] Matt. v. 44. [2] Rom. xii. 19-21. [3] Whittier.

The lines are profoundly true in one sense; they are wholly false in another. In one sense they are true. To maintain that, because the distance and contrast between our own life and the life of God is so immense, His moral perfections lie beyond the limits of human thought; and that, therefore, we cannot be sure that His righteousness and mercy are the same as the righteousness and mercy which are known to us, is to destroy the possibility of religious faith and religious worship. I wholly agree with the criticism of Mr. John Stuart Mill on the famous Bampton Lecture of Mr. Mansel: 'Language has no meaning for the words Just, Merciful, Benevolent, save that in which we predicate them of our fellow-creatures; and unless that is what we intend to express by them, we have no business to employ the words. If in affirming them of God we do not mean to affirm these very qualities, differing only as greater in degree, we are neither philosophically nor morally entitled to affirm them at all.'[1]

But it does not follow that what would be right and beautiful in my conduct towards a fellow-man, is the rule and law of the divine conduct towards him; for God's relations to him are wholly different from mine.

Even among ourselves that which is right in one man may be wrong in another. Different relations create different moral duties. A boy has treated his brother with wanton and reckless cruelty; the

[1] J. S. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, p. 101. London: Longmans and Co., 1865. See also Note X.

injured brother may feel no resentment and may entreat his father to inflict no punishment. There is beauty and nobleness in his magnanimity and generosity. But the father may be under the most stringent obligation to punish the offender and to punish him severely. The relation between father and child is different from that between brother and brother. Or, to take another illustration: A good, kindly man has been violently assaulted on the highway, and, after being robbed, was left half dead; he knows the criminal, but is unwilling to prosecute; he wishes to treat him as Christ charges us to treat our enemies; he wants to show him kindness and to assist him to live a better life. This is the proof of a most gracious and merciful temper. But the assault was witnessed by the police; it is not their business to show kindness to the criminal, but to seize him and bring him to justice. The offence is proved in court; it is not the business of the judge to arrange to send the man home and to find him money to support him till he can get employment, but to inflict on him a just sentence; for the judge is 'a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil;' and 'he beareth not the sword in vain.'[1]

What is morally beautiful in a child may not be morally beautiful in a parent; what is noble in a private citizen may be a grave dereliction of duty in a judge. Mutual duties are determined by mutual relations; and our own relations to our fellow-men are so

[1] Rom. xiii. 4.

different from God's relations to them that what might be evil in us may be good in Him. And it is observable that when Paul charges the Christians at Rome not to 'avenge' themselves, he adds, 'for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.'[1] *We* are not to avenge the wrongs which we suffer; for if it is right and necessary to inflict vengeance *God* will inflict it. The acts by which God avenges injustice are no example to us. We are forbidden to imitate them.

Archbishop Whately, in a striking Essay on *The Danger of an erroneous Imitation of Christ's Teaching*, makes some very just observations which are relevant to this subject:

'When two persons are placed in different circumstances, one of them, when seeking to take pattern from the other, may attempt this so unwisely, as to depart from the model instead of following it. The one may be acting suitably to the position *he* occupies, and the circumstances *he* is placed in, and the other—the injudicious imitator—may be acting *un*suitably to his own. A private citizen, for instance, who would profit by the example of some wise and good king, must do so by rightly discharging the duties of a *private* citizen; not by assuming the demeanour and the functions of a sovereign.'[2]

In applying his principle the Archbishop says that—

'if . . . any Christian instructors should pretend to imitate our Divine Master, by teaching as with "authority and not as the

[1] Romans xiii. 19.

[2] Richard Whately, *Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith*, etc. Third Edition, p. 89. London: John W. Parker and Son.

scribes," they would by that very procedure become *un*like Him, since they would be assuming (which He never did) a power not really conferred by Heaven.'[1]

He might also have said that if any Christian preachers presumed to denounce their hearers as 'hypocrites,' 'whited sepulchres,' the 'offspring of vipers,' outwardly appearing 'righteous unto men, but inwardly . . . full of hypocrisy and iniquity,'[2] they would be very far from imitating our Lord's example. Christ was the Son of God; He knew the hearts of men; He was their Lord and their Judge; He had the right to lash and scourge men with these fiery words, in order to rouse them from their moral insensibility and to shake their hearts with fear. But if we, who ourselves are sinners, addressed our fellow-men in the same way, we should be guilty of arrogance; we should be assuming a knowledge and an authority which we do not possess; we should not be showing our reverence for Christ, but our forgetfulness of His unique greatness and majesty. What would be 'evil' in us was 'good' in Him.

It may be said that the relation between father and child is analogous to the relation between God and man; and that if a father does not require an 'atonement' before forgiving his child's sin, we have no reason to suppose that God will require an 'atonement' before forgiving ours. But no human relations can adequately represent the relations between God and

[1] *Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith*, etc., p. 90.
[2] Matt. xxiii. 27-33.

ourselves; and the analogy between the relation of a father to a child and the relation of God to man breaks down at a critical point—the point on which the whole question of the necessity for an 'atonement' depends. The powers of a father are limited by a higher Authority; he is not the supreme moral Ruler of the child; the father is a sinner as well as the child. You cannot argue that because a father does not ask for an 'atonement' before he forgives his child, God can ask for no 'atonement' before He forgives us. God is the Representative and Defender of the Eternal Law of Righteousness in a sense in which an earthly father is not.

I say that moral duties arise out of moral relations, and that, since God's moral relations to men are wholly different from men's moral relations to each other, it is illegitimate to contend that because a good man does not require an 'atonement' before he forgives, God can require none.

(II.) The objection that, since *we* forgive other men without asking for an 'atonement,' it is not conceivable that God, whose goodness is infinitely greater than ours, should ask for an 'atonement' before forgiving us, rests upon another assumption which is very obviously false. It assumes that there is no deep and fundamental difference between God's forgiveness and ours. I think it possible that, in very many cases, it is this assumption that makes the conception of the 'Atonement' incredible.

I will state the objection again:—We, it is said,

do not ask for an 'atonement' before forgiving those who sin against us, why should God ask for an atonement before forgiving those who sin against Him? A more exact statement of the objection would be—We do not *provide* an 'atonement' before forgiving those who sin against us, why should God provide an 'atonement' before forgiving those who sin against Him?

(*a*) But *we* never forgive sin; we cannot forgive it We may dismiss the just resentment which has been provoked by a cruel wrong. We may love the doer of the wrong with an undiminished affection. But to forgive his sin is beyond our authority and power.

A woman whose life has been made for many years a protracted agony by the cruelty of her husband, who has been dragged down from comfort to misery by his reckless extravagance, whose health has been ruined by his vice, whose heart has been broken by his brutality, may cling to him with an invincible affection. When the shadow of death is darkening upon her, the early tenderness of the days when she first received him as a lover may breathe in the whispers in which she bids him farewell; she may caress him as softly as in those happier times; she may completely dismiss, if she ever felt, the resentment justly provoked by her wrongs; the light of the old love and the old joy may shine in her wasted face; but are his sins against her forgiven? No; he still deserves damnation for the way in which he has treated her; and he is still in danger of damnation.

She feels no resentment against him. Whatever estrangement may have been created between them has vanished. His offences against her are all swept away in the strong tides of her love; but his *sin* is not forgiven—*that* remains; and if his conscience is not dead, the frankness and generosity of her affection will bring home to him afresh the enormity of his crimes; will fill him with remorse; will kindle in his heart fierce fires of moral torture. The burden of his guilt will not be lightened.

But the Divine Forgiveness liberates us from this awful burden. As far as the east is from the west so far it removes our transgressions from us. The liberation may seem incredible to those who have not known it; it is a great mystery; but the experience of countless multitudes of Christian men bears witness to its reality, its blessedness, and its power. At the touch of God the chains by which they were bound to their sins fell away from them as the chains of Peter fell away at the touch of the angel. The evil deeds which they have done cannot be undone, the evil words which they have said cannot be unsaid, the time has gone by when the duties which they neglected could be discharged; conscience still condemns their crimes; but it ceases to condemn *them*; the heart recovers its buoyancy, and is filled with perfect peace. To use the old illustrations, it is as if they had been crushed for years by an enormous debt which they had no hope of ever being able to pay, and the debt had been

generously remitted; it is as if they had been slaves for years with no hope of ever being able to purchase their liberty, and a great price had been paid to ransom them and set them free. The illustrations are wholly inadequate, and if they are regarded as being anything more than illustrations, they may lead us into conceptions of the Christian redemption which are grossly false; but at a single point they indicate the kind of effect which follows from God's Forgiveness of sin. God's Forgiveness cancels guilt as the remission of a debt cancels the debt; it liberates from guilt as the payment of a ransom liberates from slavery. You may say that this emancipation from the guilt of sin when once the sin has been committed is impossible; the sin and the guilt of it must cling to the sinner for ever; but the remission of sin is assured to us by the Christian Gospel, and the blessedness of the remission has been verified in the experience of Christian men through sixty generations. Man cannot, in this deep and real sense of the word, forgive sin; God can and does. It can hardly be safe to argue that because man can grant the less effective forgiveness without an 'atonement,' no 'atonement' is necessary as the condition of God's Forgiveness.

(β) There is another immense and critical difference between God's Forgiveness of sin and ours. No matter how completely another man forgives the wrong which I have done him, I am conscious that his forgiveness does not obliterate my ill-desert, and

that I am still in peril of whatever loss and suffering may be the just penalty of my sin. The penalty may reach me, in part, through the order of the universe; it may reach me, in part, direct from the hand of God. In either case it will be the expression and defence of the Eternal Law of Righteousness. Conscience, even apart from revelation, menaces the guilty with retribution; and revelation confirms the menace. There are some who maintain that the penalty cannot be escaped; that the Eternal Law is automatic and inflexible; that whatever a man deserves to suffer, he will suffer.[1] But even though we recoil from the appalling doctrine which enthrones a rigid Justice over the moral universe and denies to Mercy all authority and power, it is certain that the penalties which are due to wrong-doing cannot be wholly averted by any human forgiveness of the wrong-doer. The suffering and the loss which come from the constitution of the universe and from the organisation of society may, in some cases—in many cases—be lessened by the remedial forces which are at the command of human affection and by a generous self-sacrifice on the part of the innocent to avert ruin from the guilty; but, even when the forgiveness of those who have been injured is most unreserved, they may be unable to save the wrong-doer from severe punishment.

If there were nothing more in the Divine Forgive-

[1] For a discussion of this theory, see *The Atonement*, pp. 318-320 and 495-497.

ness of human sin than a dismissal of what may be described as personal resentment against the sinner, a victory of the divine love over divine indignation provoked by ingratitude, disobedience, and revolt, it might be safe to argue that as we ourselves forgive without requiring an 'atonement,' the transcendent goodness of God would require none. But as the Divine Forgiveness obliterates the sense of guilt and releases the sinner from penalties which he has incurred by his violation of the eternal moral order, it may well be that an 'atonement' is necessary as the condition of God's Forgiveness, though it is not necessary as the condition of ours.

Indeed, the whole of this contention that the mercy which we may hope to receive from God must be larger and more generous than we are required to show to each other, and that therefore no 'atonement' can be necessary, as the ground on which God forgives sin, rests upon a false conception of the doctrine which is assailed. The fact that at the impulse of His infinite mercy, and without any 'atonement,' God has dismissed His personal resentment against our sinful race, that His love has triumphed over His moral indignation against our sins lies at the very foundation of the Christian conception of the Death of Christ. Whatever the affection and magnanimity of parent or wife can do—without an 'atonement'—for child or husband who has been guilty of the worst offences, God—without an 'atonement'—has done for us. He has done

infinitely more. His love is not the result of the Propitiation, but its cause. His grace is not bought by the Death of Christ; it was His grace which surrendered Christ to Death for us sinners and our salvation. All that we can do is to dismiss our personal resentment against the man who has sinned; to love him notwithstanding his sin; to put forth our strength to rescue him from the results of his sin; this we can do, without asking for an 'atonement.' All this God has done, without asking for an atonement. But His Forgiveness obliterates the sense of guilt — which ours cannot do; liberates from the penalties incurred by the violation of the moral order of the universe—which ours cannot do; and that God might be able to grant us this ampler deliverance, this completer redemption, Christ died for us. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.'

II

It is also objected to the doctrine of the Atonement that it is unjust to allow the innocent to suffer for the guilty.

Unjust to allow the innocent to suffer for the guilty! But to suffer for the guilty is precisely what generous and noble natures long to do—precisely what they are doing continually. The voluntary suffering of the innocent for the guilty is one of the loftiest forms of heroism. Is there any injustice in giving freedom to a man to be heroic?

Unjust for the innocent to suffer for the guilty! You may call it so if you will; for me, suffering of that kind, voluntarily endured, is one of the chief glories of human nature. I have known a woman, accustomed to luxurious habits of living, deliberately renounce half her fortune, and sacrifice at a stroke, for the rest of her days, the means of indulging her tastes, to cover the defalcations of a relative, to save him from public ignominy, to give him another chance of an honourable life.

Unjust for the innocent to suffer for the guilty! Come with me. I will show you a room where a young man is lying, burning through and through with the fires of a righteous penalty for his drunkenness and profligacy. His hands tremble; his feet tremble; every fibre in his body trembles. He is haunted by horrible and ghastly visions. He deserves it all. But at his side, through day after day and night after night, there watches the mother, of whose love he has been reckless; she is doing her best to alleviate his misery, and is fighting a hard battle for him with death. His ravings fill her with terror; the strain upon her is almost intolerable; she grows paler and paler; her eyes become hollow; her step is unsteady; her strength is wasting away; her own life is in danger; or, if she lives, her health will be broken and her future years will be years of weakness and pain. Tell her that it is unjust that the innocent should endure all this suffering for the guilty—a gleam of light will transfigure her face, and she will tell you

that Love is diviner than Justice, and that she suffers gladly if only her son may be saved.

It is beautiful and gracious to dismiss our resentment against those who have sinned; it is more beautiful and more gracious freely to suffer for them. Who shall dare to deny to God—in the name of Justice—the highest form of goodness that is possible to man? If by enduring death for us the Son of God, in whom and through whom the human race is related to the Eternal Father, can enable the Divine Mercy to liberate men from the awful sense of guilt and from the loss and penalty which by the principles of the moral order of the universe they have incurred by sin, who shall venture to tell Him that Divine Justice forbids the sacrifice and that human misery cannot accept the redemption which the sacrifice achieves? He, too, will answer that Love is diviner than Justice, and that He suffers gladly if only the guilty may be saved.

Self-sacrifice, painful and disheartening labour on the part of the innocent, appears to be the irrevocable condition of every effective endeavour to rescue men from the just results of their folly, their indolence, and their vice. The brightest pages in the history of our race are precisely those which are covered with the story of suffering and of exhausting labour, voluntarily undertaken and endured, by the noble for the base, by the righteous for the unrighteous, by the innocent for the guilty. The moral order of the world is a revelation of the life of God. The law

of service imposed upon *us*, is the law which God has accepted for Himself; *we* have to serve and to save the unworthy by suffering for them; God has served and saved *us* by suffering for us. Underlying all the self-sacrifice to which men are called for each other, is the supreme self-sacrifice which the Son of God has made for us all. It is a sacrifice infinitely greater than any that is possible to us, because He is infinitely greater than we are; and the transcendent glory of the redemption which it accomplishes for mankind corresponds to the transcendent glory of the Sacrifice.

III

But in the case of large numbers of Christian people the real obstacle to a belief in the Death of Christ as a Sacrifice for sin lies far beyond the reach of such considerations as those on which I have dwelt in this discourse. The great truths of the Christian Gospel cannot be apprehended without a certain spiritual experience. They receive their interpretation from life. Where there is no vivid consciousness of the guilt of sin, there can be no deep craving for the Forgiveness of sin, no serious sense of the need of an Atonement for sin, and no real belief in the awful fact that Christ died for the sins of the world. Indeed, apart from the consciousness of guilt the idea of an Atonement is unintelligible. Now, among the Christian people with whom I have lived during the last thirty years, the consciousness of guilt

has not, I think, in very many cases, been strongly developed. The religious life, as I have known it, has commonly originated in a sense of the loneliness of the soul that has not found God; or of the incompleteness of life when there is no distinct vision of its infinite horizons; or it has sprung from a desire to reach a perfection which is inaccessible apart from the divine power and grace; or there has been great sorrow, and the heart has turned to God for consolation; or the authority of Christ has appealed to conscience and has constrained the submission of the will; or a man has discovered that the religious faith of his wife or his child or his friend is the source of a power and elevation and peace which he thinks that he would like to possess; or there has been a vague impression that there would come to him, in answer to trust in Christ and to prayer, and, as the result of the persistent endeavour to do Christ's will, some great, undefined, and unknown good. But in comparatively few instances has it seemed to me that there was any keen sense of the guilt of sin—as distinguished from the evil of sin—or any vehement desire for God's pardon.

I do not mean of course that the majority of the Christian people who have spoken to me freely about their religious experience had no sense of their guilt; but that the sense of their guilt was not intense and distressing—that it was much fainter than their consciousness of moral weakness and their desire for the Divine strength that would enable them to live

righteously, and satisfy the demands of conscience. To put the matter briefly, I find that there are large numbers of men who wish to become better in the future, and who trust in Christ to enable them to become better; but comparatively few who feel that they have any urgent need of the Divine Forgiveness for what they are now, or for what they have been in the past. There may be a great depth of earnestness in the prayer, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me;' but there is no passion and intensity in the cry, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.'[1] Sometimes, indeed, where there has been no agony in the consciousness of guilt at the beginning of the Christian life, and where the Divine Forgiveness has been received as a matter of course and without any rapture of joy, a man suddenly awakens to the discovery of the transcendent greatness of the mercy of God in forgiving him; he learns the greatness of his guilt after the guilt has been cancelled; and then, when he has been serving Christ for many years, there comes to him a clear and strong conception of the worth and power of the Atonement; but whether this is a common experience, I cannot tell.

'Remission,' says an eminent theological writer whose books have exerted a powerful influence on the religious thought of large numbers of Christian

[1] Ps. li. 10, 1.

people both in this country and in America,—'Remission, both in Greek and English, is a popular word which signifies, in common speech, a *letting go*: that is, a letting go of blame, a consenting to raise no impeachment further and to have all wounded feeling dismissed . . . It is only a kind of formality, or verbal discharge, that carries practically no discharge at all.'[1] Forgiveness 'a kind of formality!' The phrase represents a strain of thought which is very common among excellent Christian people, and which is present in a great deal of popular religious literature.

We cannot easily escape from the power of the life of our contemporaries. We think as they think; we feel as they feel. Only a few elect souls in any generation can leave the multitude and ascend to those divine heights in which they can hear for themselves the voice of God; the communion of saints is necessary even to *them*; and even they must be more or less deeply affected by the spirit and temper of their generation. Not until the sense of the guilt of sin and the craving for the Divine Forgiveness become as general, as earnest, and as intense, as the desire for moral and spiritual perfection, will the Death of Christ as an Atonement for sin inspire a deep and passionate gratitude, or recover its ancient place in the thought and life of the Christian Church.

[1] Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, pp. 359, 360. Strahan and Co., 1866.

XII

THE ATONEMENT (III)

'*He is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*'—1 JOHN II. 2.

THIS morning I propose to speak to those who believe—on the authority of Christ and of His apostles, and on the authority of Christian experience—that Christ died for the sins of men, but to whom the mystery is surrounded by clouds and darkness, through which they suppose that it is impossible for human thought to penetrate. There are large numbers of devout Christian men who, while relying with perfect faith on the Death of Christ as the ground of the Forgiveness of sin, maintain that every attempt of theologians, from the time of Anselm to our own, to discover the principles on which the Atonement rests, fails to satisfy the Christian Conscience and the Christian Reason; and they have reached the conclusion that it is presumptuous for us in these last days to hope for any better success. It is to these I propose to speak.

I venture to think that past failures may, perhaps, have resulted from approaching the Death of Christ as a great mystery which must be illustrated—if

it can be illustrated at all—by what we know, from other sources, concerning God's moral Sovereignty over the human race, and concerning the nature of the penalties of sin which are remitted because Christ died for us. I shall approach the Death of Christ this morning, as being not merely a great mystery, which it is, but a new and most wonderful revelation of God, and of His relations to mankind. I shall approach it not as a great darkness, to which we have to bring light from other manifestations of the divine righteousness and goodness, but as itself a new glory.

The Incarnation is a great mystery; but it is also a surprising revelation of the eternal life of God, a revelation which does not suppress, but transcends, all that God had revealed of Himself before. If it is assumed that in substance all that can be known of God is known apart from the Incarnation—is known through philosophical speculation, through the wonders of the visible universe, through the powers and constitution of human nature, through the witness of conscience to the august authority of Righteousness—if, I say, it is assumed that the knowledge of God, which is derived through these channels, is final, the Incarnation will seem to us impossible. But when the Eternal Word became flesh, He expanded and enlarged our conception of God. It is not until we know God as revealed in the Incarnation, that the Incarnation becomes credible.

The Death of Christ for the sins of men is also

a great mystery. But every act of God must contain a revelation of God; and it is reasonable to believe that an act which occupies a central position in the Christian Gospel must contain an exceptionally wonderful revelation of Him. We should expect that it would pour a new light on whole provinces of religious truth; that it would enlarge and deepen our knowledge of God, and of His relations to mankind. The Atonement is a great mystery, but I shall approach it in this discourse—believing that it is also a great revelation.

That the Death of Christ for human sin is a great revelation of the divine love for man, is acknowledged with reverence and joy and thanksgiving by all Christian men. If I were to dwell on that aspect of it, I might discourse on nothing else, morning after morning, month after month, through the brief years which remain of my earthly ministry. But let us endeavour to see whether it does not reveal something else, and whether, in what else it reveals, it does not make its revelation of the divine love more glorious.

Dismissing then for the time all theories about sin and the penalties due to sin, and about the principles and methods of God's government of the human race, let us look at such declarations as these: 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' Christ 'suffered for sins once, the Righteous for the unrighteous'; 'He bare our sins in His own body on the tree'; 'He is the Propitiation for our

sins'; these are the words of the three great representative apostles, Paul, Peter, and John.[1] And our Lord Himself said at the Lord's Supper, 'This is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'[2]

I

Does not the fact affirmed in these declarations—whatever insoluble questions it may suggest—reveal, in a very surprising and impressive form, *the existence of a unique and most intimate relation between the Son of God and the human race?* If he died for men, died for the sins of men, died that men might receive the remission of sins, must there not be a relation between Christ and men wholly different from that which exists between men themselves? However intimately men are related to each other, every man is so far isolated from every other man that we cannot conceive of a good man enduring death that a bad man may receive God's forgiveness. But at the Cross men have discovered that there is no such isolation between themselves and the Son of God. They may have heard elsewhere that, as the result of a strenuous righteousness tested and perfected by the temptations and toils of many painful years, as the result of severe self-discipline and of prolonged meditation on the glory of the eternal, saints may rise at last into a

[1] Rom. v. 8; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 1 John ii. 2.
[2] Matt. xxvi. 28.

blessed fellowship with the divine life and joy; but at the Cross they have learnt that while saintliness is still remote, there is a mysterious union between themselves and the Son of God; a union so real that the shadow of their sins has fallen upon Him, and that, in the horror of that great darkness, He cried: 'My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken Me?'[1]

In this discovery they have first seen, dimly and imperfectly, the transcendent truth which all their later Christian experience has confirmed, and which has been the strength and glory of their Christian life. That discovery changed their whole conception of God and of His relations to themselves. They learnt that if God, in His Eternal Majesty and Perfection and Power, is at an infinite distance above them He is also nearer to them, and more intimately one with them than the closest and dearest of their earthly friends. That the Eternal Son of God died for their sins was a witness to a solidarity between themselves and Him of a most wonderful kind. They dwelt upon it; they brooded over it; and the more earnestly they dwelt upon it, the longer they brooded over it, the more real and the more wonderful it became to them. And then they discovered that the relations between themselves and Christ did not merely draw Christ into fellowship with their miseries, but also drew them into fellowship with His glory. They learnt that the very roots of their life are in the Eternal Son of God; and that the characteristic power

[1] Matt. xxvii. 40.

and grace of the life of the Eternal Son of God are to be revealed in their own perfection. 'I am the vine,' said Christ, 'ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing.'[1] 'As the body is one,' said Paul, 'and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free.'[2]

The solidarity between ourselves and Christ which we discover in the mysterious fact that He died for our sins is confirmed and illustrated by all the later experiences of the Christian life. It is through our union with the Eternal Son that we become sons of God: His Sonship is the reason and ground of ours. It is through our union with the Eternal Son that we have the power and grace to live the true life of sons. God 'foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.' 'In Christ' God 'hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing.' His grace was 'freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.'[3] These passages, confirmed as they are by Christian experience, declare that we share His Sonship, and that it is in the power of His life that we are able to live as sons. Through the solidarity between ourselves and Christ *He* shares the sorrow and shame, the suffering and the death, which are the results of our sins. Through that same solidarity between ourselves and Christ *we* are made

[1] John xv. 5. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. [3] Eph. i. 5, 3, 6.

'partakers of the divine nature,' and become children of God; 'and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'[1] The later experience confirms the earlier faith. If—as we *know*—Christ is the root of our righteousness and the reason and ground of our sonship—it is not hard to *believe* that He is the Propitiation for our sins.

II

The Death of Christ for the sins of men throws light upon the nature of *the moral supremacy and sovereignty of God, and contains a solution of a grave moral difficulty with regard to God's relations to the penalties of sin.* The nature of the difficulty will appear from a consideration of what we know of the moral sovereignty of God from conscience and from speculation, apart from the Christian Atonement.

Apart, then, from the Christian Atonement, we know that God has an eternal and absolute authority over our race, an authority which He could not renounce without ceasing to be God. The supreme, unlimited authority which conscience acknowledges in the Eternal Law of Righteousness is recognised by religious faith in the Living Personal God.

And yet we cannot believe that there is anything arbitrary, either in the moral commandments of God or in the penalties which menace us if we violate them. It is inconceivable that Righteousness is right, merely because God commands it; He commands it

[1] 2 Peter i. 4; Rom. viii. 17.

because it is right. And the penalties of sin are not deserved, merely because God threatens them; He threatens them because they are deserved. You will remember what I said on this subject in the preceding discourse. The relations between father and child, brother and sister, neighbour and neighbour, determine their duties to each other. While the relations remain unchanged, their mutual duties remain unchanged. Vary their relations and their mutual duties are varied. While the actual constitution of a family, for example, remains what it is, parents must continue under the obligation to love and care for their children, and children must continue under the obligation to love and obey their parents. These obligations were not created, and they could not be dissolved by a divine commandment. Similarly, the relations between man and God determine man's obligations to God. God being what He is, man is bound to love God, to trust Him, to worship Him, to obey Him. This is what is meant by the Eternal Law of Righteousness; it means that certain relations between moral creatures being given, certain mutual moral obligations necessarily emerge; and that certain relations between a spiritual creature and God being given, certain religious obligations emerge. It means further that, according to what we call the nature of things, and apart from any arbitrary determination of God, those moral creatures who violate their obligations either to each other or to God, deserve punishment.

This is the conception of God which we reach through Conscience. It is an august but austere conception. The free Personality of God appears to be absorbed in the inexorable necessities of the Eternal Law of Righteousness. The actual constitution of the world being given, God cannot reverse the moral law which condemns untruthfulness, injustice, cruelty, impurity, covetousness; nor can He reverse the moral law which determines that the untruthful, the unjust, the cruel, the impure, the covetous, deserve punishment. When men have dishonoured the Law by violating its precepts, it belongs to Him to inflict its penalties. How then can sin be forgiven? There are some who believe that Forgiveness is impossible; that the laws of the moral and spiritual order are automatic; that the penalties which they threaten will be inflicted—must be inflicted—'to the last jot and tittle,' upon every sinner.

The Death of Christ for the sins of men reveals the great truth that the Freedom of God is not suppressed by the Eternal Law of Righteousness; and that God has power to forgive.

Let us consider more closely what it is that Conscience declares concerning the punishment due to sin. When we say that a bad man *ought* to suffer for his crimes, we do not mean that he discharges any duty—illustrates any virtue—by suffering, but that he *deserves* to suffer; that in the nature of things, and according to the Eternal Moral Order, he deserves to

suffer. Rewards for goodness and penalties for wrong-doing are in this respect analogous. A good man *ought* to be the happier and the more honoured because of his goodness; but if he fails to receive honour and to enjoy happiness, this cannot be attributed to him as a crime; the fault is not his; he is wronged because there is some defect, or apparent defect, in the Moral Order of Society or the Universe. The bad man *deserves* to suffer. The infliction of the suffering may exasperate him, may make him sullen, may harden his heart, may make him more reckless and desperate in his wickedness than he was before. And yet he *deserves* to suffer; and as there is a defect in the Moral Order if the good man does not receive honour and happiness, is there not a defect in the Moral Order if the bad man is not punished for his wickedness?

The question assumes another form when we pass from the Moral Order to the Living Personal God, who is the Sovereign of the Moral Universe. Is there not a failure in God if, sooner or later, the good man is not honoured and made happy on account of his goodness, and if, sooner or later, the bad man does not receive adequate punishment for his sin? The bad man, indeed, would not be wronged if the punishment, which, as I have said, might make him worse than before, is withheld; but is it not God's part to fulfil the Law of Righteousness by inflicting penalties for wrong-doing, as it is our part to keep its commandments? Has not the Law which declares

that these penalties are deserved its roots and foundations in His own Eternal Life? Must He not, by inflicting them, reveal His condemnation of sin? If He must, how can He forgive? The Christian Atonement, I repeat, discloses the truth that the Freedom of God is not suppressed by the Eternal Law of Righteousness. God Himself, in the Person of His Son, has become flesh. There is a wonderful solidarity between Him and the human race. Our sin He could not share; but He came into the dark and awful shadow which sin has cast upon the life of men. How dark the shadow was we never knew until it fell upon His great glory and eclipsed it. This, according to the Christian Gospel, is the revelation of God's estimate and judgment of human sin. It is a complete and adequate revelation. And now, God can freely forgive the sins of men.

III

The Death of Christ for the sins of men illustrates the truth that He is *the 'Way' to the Father, and that no one cometh to the Father but by Him.*[1] His disciples had been perplexed as well as greatly troubled, by the announcement that He was about to leave them. Peter had asked him, 'Whither goest Thou?' and our Lord had replied: 'Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.' Then He had spoken of His 'Father's

[1] John xiv. 5, 6.

House,' in which there are 'many mansions,' and of His going 'to prepare a place for them'; adding, 'whither I go, ye know the Way.' But it seemed to Thomas and, no doubt, to the other apostles that Simon Peter's question, 'whither goest Thou,' had not really been answered: 'Lord,' he said, 'we know not *whither* Thou goest; how know we the Way?' In reply to Thomas came the wonderful words: 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me.'[1]

During our Lord's earthly humiliation He had voluntarily separated Himself from the blessedness and glory which He had with the Father 'before the foundation of the world.' To that blessedness and glory He was now returning. His return involved a temporary separation from His disciples. He was no longer to walk with them through the fields of Galilee; He was never again to sit with them at table in the houses of their friends; they were never again to listen to Him teaching the people on the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth, or in the synagogue at Capernaum, or in the courts of the temple in Jerusalem. But He told them that their separation was not to be for ever: 'I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, ye may be also.'[2] An hour or two later they heard Him say in His great prayer, 'Father, . . . I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.'[3]

[1] John xiii. 36—xiv. 6. [2] John xiv. 3. [3] John xvii. 24.

When, therefore, He said 'Whither I go ye know the Way . . . I am the Way . . . no one cometh unto the Father but by Me,' He meant that He Himself was the 'Way' by which the disciples were to travel to that perfect life in which they were to dwell with Him in the eternal light of God.

For that final access to God through Christ we are prepared by access to God through Christ during our earthly years. This was the experience of apostles,[1] and it has been the experience of Christian men in all later generations. It is by living the life that Christ lived, and by living it in the power of union with Christ, that we find God. It is in the power of His trust that we trust in the Father; in the power of His love that we love the Father; in the power of His obedience that we obey the Father. We approach God in Him.

But we are sinful men; how can we approach God in the power of the life of His Son who is glorious in the glory of a stainless holiness, and in whom the Father has always been 'well pleased'? The answer to that question is given in the Death of Christ for the sins of the world. He in whom we approach God has not only confessed our sins with a grief and a humiliation far deeper and more intense than is possible to ourselves, He has actually suffered for them.

The most fearful element in the extreme penalty of sin must be the discovery of the sternness of

[1] Rom. v. 2; Eph. ii. 18.

the divine judgment of it, the revelation of the 'indignation and wrath' which it has created in the God of infinite pity and love. This is the consuming fire in which those who are in final revolt against the divine righteousness and grace will suffer 'eternal destruction.'[1] And the awful shadow which began to fall upon our Lord in Gethsemane, and which, in the depth and horror of its darkness, forced from Him the cry of desolation on the cross, appears to have come from the agony with which He realised God's judgment of the guilt of the human race—the race to which He Himself belonged and which He loved with an infinite love. Of His own will He consented to pass through that appalling experience—an experience which, to consummate its reality, was uncheered by the manifestations of the Father's presence and love. It was more than the strength of His human nature could bear. He died under the burden of the intolerable woe.[2]

IV

And now, recalling what we have discovered in the Death of Christ, can we see any relation between that Death and the Forgiveness of sin? I think that we can.

(1) When we forgive those who have wronged us, we dismiss our personal resentment against them.

[1] 2 Thess. i. 9. [2] Note Y.

We return good for evil. Instead of yielding to our just indignation and endeavouring to avenge the wrong, we allow the old springs of kindliness and affection to flow freely, and we render all friendly services to the men who have wronged us. We can do nothing more; and we do it without asking for any 'atonement.'

The Death of Christ for the sins of men is itself a declaration that God—apart from any atonement—has dismissed what may be described as personal resentment against those who have sinned; that instead of desiring to avenge their revolt against His authority His heart is set upon their eternal redemption; that He has an infinite love and pity for them. It is He Himself who in the person of His Son has died for men. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'[1]

(2) But when we forgive those who have wronged us they are still in peril of the loss and suffering which according to the Eternal Moral Order are the just penalties of sin.[2] When God forgives men, He releases them from these penalties; and the Death of Christ is the ground on which He releases them. In that Death He Himself in the person of the Son endured loss and suffering on account of human sin instead of inflicting them. There is such solidarity between the Son of God and the human race that through Him we become the sons of God and share

[1] 1 John iv. 10.

[2] See *ante*, p. 245.

His eternal glory; there is such solidarity between the Son of God and the human race that it was possible for Him to suffer for our sins; and on the ground of His suffering the penalties of our sins are remitted.

(3) When we forgive those who have wronged us, their conscience may scourge them more mercilessly after we have forgiven them than it did before. The very generosity which we have shown in forgiving them may make their shame and humiliation for the wrong which they have done us more acute and intolerable.[1] When God forgives, He liberates us from the sense of guilt, restores to the soul peace and light and buoyancy; and it is through the Death of Christ that He liberates us. In that Death He has adequately expressed His condemnation of our sin, and, when He ceases to condemn, Conscience, which is His minister, need condemn no longer.

(4) While the Death of Christ is the sole ground and condition of the Divine Forgiveness of sin, it is morally necessary, if we are to receive Forgiveness, that there should be on our part a frank and sincere confession of sin, a humble submission to the righteousness of God in condemning and punishing it. In the realms of ethical and spiritual life there can be no effective giving where there is no receiving; and there can be no receiving of the Remission of sin where its guilt and ill-desert are not felt. We have access to God through Christ,

[1] See *ante*, p. 243.

because Christ, in whom are the roots of our life, submitted to and accepted God's condemnation of our sin; and in the power of His submission and acceptance we too accept and submit. This is the spirit in which sinful men should approach God, and in union with Christ this spirit becomes ours because Christ died for our sins.[1]

V

There is another relation between the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Forgiveness of sins. The Divine Forgiveness, though it is a transcendent and glorious act of God's grace, is only a part of the Christian salvation; and we cannot imagine that God would forgive sins on any conditions which did not secure that those who received forgiveness would break with sin and live righteously.

According to the teaching of Paul the Death of Christ is not only the ground on which sin is forgiven, it is also the power by which sin is destroyed. In the Epistle to the Romans, after illustrating the truth that we are justified by the grace of God through Christ, he asks: 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? . . . Our old man was crucified with Him. . . If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him . . . The death that He died, He died unto

[1] Note Z.

sin once: but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God.'[1] In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he states the truth in another form: 'We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.'[2] He returns to the same truth in the Epistle to the Colossians: 'Ye died,'—died with Christ,—'and your life is hid with Christ in God.'[3] And in his Epistle to the Galatians he says: 'I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.'[4]

According to these passages the relations between our Lord Jesus Christ and ourselves are so intimate that His Death is a great and critical event in our own history. Whatever happens to the vine affects the life and condition of all its branches; and in the Death of Christ we died. But we died to live again —to live in the power of the life of the risen and glorified Christ—to live unto God.[5]

The Death of Christ was a voluntary act. 'I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.'[6] It was an act of supreme and awful moral energy and of immense self-sacrifice. It was a voluntary transition from life in one sphere to life in another sphere; and to whatever blessedness He was passing, and from whatever misery, the transition itself was an

[1] Rom. vi. 1-10. [2] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. [3] Col. iii. 3.
[4] Gal. ii. 20. [5] Not AA. [6] John x. 17, 18.

agony, it was a rending asunder of the very constituents of his nature.

May we venture to think that it is in the power of that supreme act by which Christ separated Himself from His life in the flesh and passed to His life in God that we, too, make the transition from the lower to the diviner life? Does His great act, in virtue of our union with Him, carry ours with it? Is this a partial—though it can only be a partial—account of the mystery?

It is obvious that His Death has not actually destroyed all sin even in those who have received the Christian redemption. But Christian experience illustrates and confirms the Pauline doctrine. Devout men have discovered that in some wonderful way the Death of Christ has given them the power to die to sin, just as they have discovered that in His life they have the power to love God and to live righteously. They have learnt that 'the destruction of evil within us is the effect and fulfilment in ourselves of the mystery of Christ's Death, as the development of our positive holiness is the manifestation of the power of His life.'[1]

By His Death and Resurrection, God 'delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.'[2] What was accomplished once for all in Christ has been gradually realised in the lives of individual Christian men as

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 427. See a brief discussion of this subject, 425-430.

[2] Col. i. 13.

their union with Christ has been gradually perfected.

But, if the Death of Christ is a power by which sin is destroyed, this is an additional reason why the Death of Christ should be the ground and condition of the Forgiveness of sin. [1]

[1] Note BB.

NOTES

NOTE A—PAGE 4.

PRIMITIVE BELIEFS.

ALL philosophical speculation relates to (1) God; (2) the World; or (3) Self. But, if we begin by doubting the existence of God, of the World, or of Self, the history of philosophy demonstrates that the doubt admits of no logical solution.

Reasoning, deduction, would be impossible if some things were not certain which cannot be proved by reasoning. For all reasoning is a movement of thought from premises which are accepted as true, to a conclusion which, at the beginning of the process, is regarded as doubtful. The premises of a particular argument may themselves be deductions from earlier premises; and these earlier premises may be deductions from premises earlier still. But it is clear that, if we trace back the processes of deduction, we must reach at last the original premises from which the whole movement begins —premises, the truth of which is ascertained not by deduction from other premises, but by a wholly different method.

For example: no reasoning can prove the real existence of the external world. Attempt to demonstrate that the heavens and the earth, the sea and the winds, mountains, forests, rivers, cities, our parents, our children, our friends, are not mere ideal creations projected from the mind itself, and you will discover that no demonstration is possible. From your own perceptions you cannot *infer* that what you perceive exists; unless the existence of the external world is *given* in perception—directly known—no knowledge of its existence is accessible. Nor can any reasoning prove the existence of that persistent *self* which each man asserts when he says 'I.' Let a man once assume that he has no immediate and certain consciousness of self, that he is conscious only of successive thoughts, not of himself as thinking—only of successive feelings, not of himself as

feeling—only of successive perceptions, not of himself as perceiving; let him attempt to *infer* from these experiences that he himself exists, and he will discover that the premises do not carry the conclusion, and that, for anything he can tell, there is no persistent self underlying the succession of thoughts, sensations, perceptions which fill up his waking life. The existence of *self*, and the existence of that which is *not self*, of the 'I,' and of that which is 'not I,' are alike *given* in consciousness; *we are so made* that, given our actual experiences in the world, we believe both in the 'I' and in that which is 'not I'; if we assume that either is not given, that either requires demonstration, we shall remain in perpetual uncertainty as to whether it exists or not.

If, then, it is declared that our belief in the existence of God—of an Infinite, Eternal, Righteous Holy God—does not rest on reasoning, is not a logical inference from admitted premises, this will occasion no uneasiness to those who are familiar with the criticism of human knowledge. It will not be regarded as an attempt to claim for any religious truth, and especially for the truth that God exists, any illegitimate prerogative. In every department of human knowledge there are certain original premises from which all reasoning begins. For me, in the department of religious knowledge, the existence of God is not the last link in a chain of deductions from truths which are clearer and more certain than itself; it is the first link of the chain; I do not end, I begin with it. I may endeavour to discover how and why it is that I believe in the existence of God; I may find strong confirmations of my belief; but I must somehow come to *perceive* it—as I perceive the reality of Self and of the World and their antithesis to each other. My belief in these primary facts does not rest on premises behind them from which they can be inferred.

NOTE B—PAGE 5.

CAN WE TELL HOW MEN ORIGINALLY CAME TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

I have put aside in the text purely speculative inquiries as to how a belief in the existence of the superhuman, the divine,

first came to mankind: whether it was created by what is commonly described as a supernatural revelation, or whether it was the result of the working of what we call the natural powers of men on the glory and terror of the material universe and the facts of human experience. Nor have I inquired whether the rudimentary religious conceptions of savage tribes in our own times are the ruined traditions of a nobler faith; or by what steps, if they represent the earliest thoughts of men about God, the ascent was made to a loftier conception of Him. Speculations of this description are attractive and interesting; but the historical materials at our disposal for reaching any certain conclusion seem to me to be very scanty. Ancient hymns, ancient prayers, ancient precepts, ancient traditions, preserved in our own sacred books and in the sacred books of the great religions of the East, ancient monuments, ancient religious rites—these enable us to travel back, and to travel securely, towards the dawn of religious faith. But before these books were written, before these monuments were set up, before these rites were instituted, man had already come to believe in the divine. They do not enable us to watch the breaking of the new-born day on the previous night; their existence is the witness and the proof that the sun of religious faith had already risen. The actual origin of faith lies in a remoter past.

And when these books, these monuments, these rites fail us, our path is lost; we can go no further with any confidence. The *words* which stand for the religious ideas of the early races, and some of which in changed forms have descended into modern languages, throw considerable light on the history and processes of early religious thought, but they leave the main questions as to its origin in impenetrable obscurity. What we want to know is how men came to need words as symbols of religious ideas, and what changes passed upon the words which stood at first for visible and natural objects, when they were applied to religious uses.

To attempt an *imaginative* construction of the thoughts of prehistoric man on his relations to the Universe and to unseen Powers, can lead to no solid results. The construction must be wholly arbitrary and therefore wholly worthless. We cannot place ourselves in the condition of the prehistoric man; we

cannot divest ourselves of all that we have come to know, to believe, or to suspect, as the result of the long centuries which lie between him and us. Even if we were able to dismiss from our minds all their religious contents, and then tried to imagine how the thought of God might come to us, if we were standing on the primeval earth, before any altar had been erected, or any sacrifice or prayer had been offered to unseen powers, before any prophet or priest had spoken of the divine—the experiment would have no value. For our *minds themselves* would remain; and our minds have been developed and formed by influences which have been created by ages of religious speculation and faith. And powerful *sentiments* would remain, which have received life and strength from great religious ideas expressed in language, in literature, in social customs and traditions, in sacred buildings and sacred days, in religious institutions and religious worship. It is conceivable, perhaps, that we might imaginatively dismiss the definite beliefs and impressions which have come to us from our education and our circumstances, but it is not conceivable that, by any imaginative effort, we could cease to be ourselves, with ways of thinking and feeling to which we have been disciplined by the religious observances and the religious beliefs of many generations. In the attempt to discover how man first came to believe in God, it appears to me that the materials are wanting which are necessary to make the investigation successful.

NOTE C—PAGE 20.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

Those of my readers who are not already acquainted with the very able examination, by Mr. Kennedy, of the points in which the results of modern research and the methods of modern thought are supposed to have affected the traditional arguments of Natural Theology, will be grateful to me for calling their attention to it. (*Natural Theology and Modern Thought*, by James Houghton Kennedy, B.D. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891.) If I may say it without presumption, I do not wholly agree with Mr. Kennedy's position; he attaches too much value, as I think, to 'proofs' of God's

existence, and does not sufficiently recognise that real existences must be known immediately—not by inference from real existences belonging to another sphere; but his book is one of great penetration and power. There is an amusing passage in which he discusses whether logically the doctrine of Natural Selection can be an adequate substitute for Design :—

'We must first of all bear in mind that the law of Natural Selection can act only by destroying the unfit, not by producing the fit. Those who would oppose it to Design must contend that order is produced out of an infinite or at least an immense number of chance combinations by the elimination of the unfit. It can produce nothing, and can develop nothing, further than by letting it alone. Therefore, to regard it as a positive cause would show great confusion of thought. Let us suppose that we are impressed by the admirable architecture of a city, and that, on asking about its architects, we are informed that there never were any—that there is in this city a law that every building which is unfit for human habitation must be destroyed. "Thus" (we will suppose our informants to say) "the fundamental laws of the city render it impossible that there should be any unfit houses in it. Why, then, should you seek for any further cause of that fitness of architecture which creates your admiration?" Would we not in such a case reply, "But there might have been no houses at all?" Each of the elements of the perfection of those organisms, which, owing to their superiority, have survived in that struggle for life by which Natural Selection works, must have come into existence before Natural Selection could test it. That perfection must either have been designed or undesigned —must, in other words, have been the work of design or have come by chance; for when we say a thing happens by chance, we mean nothing else than that it happens without design.' —Pp. 127-128.

NOTE D—Page 35.

CONSCIENCE AND GOD.

The argument of the first part of this discourse is stated and developed with admirable power in Dr. Wace's *Christianity and Morality*, The Boyle Lectures for 1874 and 1875 (London:

Pickering, 1876)—a book which has for many years appeared to me to be of great value, and which I have constantly recommended to friends of mine who were seriously interested in modern controversies on the Christian faith. My own obligations to it I gratefully acknowledge. Referring to the 139th Psalm Dr. Wace says :—

'I appeal to the Psalm, not as a dogmatic authority, but as a record of the experience of the human heart and conscience; and I ask whether every heart among us does not, at one time or another, feel the profound truth of the description? Conscience may for a time be dulled and deadened; but is it not on the whole the one presence which you cannot get rid of? Does it not beset you in your path and in your bed, abroad, or at home, by night or by day? If you count its suggestions, are they not more in number than the sand? If you forget it in your sleep, when you awake is it not still with you? And what is the operation of its voice? Is it content with proclaiming to you the general supremacy of a righteous law? Does it not, on the contrary, search your heart and try your thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in you? Does it not, with a mysterious justice, deal with your personal character, your private, individual, and peculiar responsibilities, making allowance for your weaknesses, condemning you in proportion to the wilfulness of your sin, but, above all things, meeting you at every turn, and in every instant of your lives, with the particular warning and guidance you need? On the answer which may be made to these questions depends the force of the considerations now suggested. But this Psalm is sufficient to show the intense vividness with which this operation of conscience was apprehended by the Jew; and let us now ask, further, whether he was not justified in the instinctive interpretation which he put upon it? He felt, indeed, in the first place, that this authority was not himself. It was an influence independent of him, stronger than he was; controlling him, and enforcing its dictates upon him. So far he commands the approval of our modern objector. But, in addition to this, he felt that an influence, which acted upon him individually and personally, must be individual and personal itself. Probably he had no speculative ideas as to what personality meant. But he knew

that his conscience dealt with him in a way to which there was nothing analogous, except the way in which living persons dealt with him. It praised and it blamed; it was not like a law, acting without reference to his special peculiarities, but it adapted its operation with infinite variety to all the varying shades of right and wrong, of error or of weakness within him. In a word, it was just as personal as he was. As heart answers to heart, and the face of man to man, so did that power, which was felt in his Conscience, correspond to his own nature' (pp. 200-202).

'Consider, in fact, whether the case may not be put even more simply and strongly. May we not say that a power which, in individuals and in the world at large, makes for righteousness, must be a righteous power; and a righteous power, or a power which acts righteously, must, in some sense or other, be a person who exercises towards us acts of will, love, and reason? If a man admits the sense of Right and Wrong, and the existence of righteous government, but denies that this involves the personality of the governing influence, all we have to ask of him is to observe with more thoroughness the operation of this righteous influence; and when an objector insists that the personification by the Jews of "an eternal power which makes for righteousness," was a mere instance of the anthropomorphic tendency of mankind, we have again only to ask him to observe more closely the operation of that power as described by the Jews themselves. He is quite right as far as he goes; but he does not go far enough. The people of Israel had a still more deep and penetrating apprehension of that righteous influence than even he claims for them. Assume that the only or the main action of that influence, is in enforcing the practical supremacy of righteousness in human conduct, and it may be possible to regard it as a law, or "stream of tendency." But once recognise it as a power dealing with your own soul, in the depths of your conscience, and dealing similarly with every individual soul; and then, if I mistake not, it becomes impossible to regard it as an impersonal influence. A law, by its very nature, takes no account of individuals. It inflicts itself upon them, and passes by, and takes no note of consequences to them. But a power which is striving to make me, in my

personality, righteous, must adjust its action to my sins, my infirmities, and my necessities, and must, in a word, act righteously towards me' (pp. 205 and 206).

NOTE E—PAGE 44.

WHAT IS ASSUMED WITH REGARD TO THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THESE DISCOURSES

It is assumed in these Discourses that, in the Four Gospels, we have a substantially trustworthy account of our Lord's teaching and of His personal history. These Gospels, as I have attempted to show elsewhere (*The Living Christ and the Four Gospels:* Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), were received as containing an authentic story of our Lord's ministry, when men were still living who had known the original apostles, and other earthly friends of our Lord. Before the Third Gospel was written 'many' had 'taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters,' which had been 'delivered' to the second generation of disciples by those who, 'from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word'; and the structure of the three first Gospels appears to prove that they were, in part, compiled from these earlier documents. But this does not affect their substantial historical trustworthiness. It is enough that they were received as containing a true account of our Lord by those who were familiar with the story told by the original apostles, and by others who had known Him during His earthly life. The evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of the Fourth Gospel is of a distinct and impressive kind.

The 'discrepancies,' which appear when the Gospels are compared with each other, do not affect the substance of the history. Mark says that our Lord gave sight to 'Bartimæus, a blind beggar,' as He 'went out from Jericho'; Matthew, that He gave sight to '*two* blind men' as He 'went out from Jericho'; Luke, that He gave sight to 'a certain blind man' as 'He *drew nigh*' to Jericho. The differences between the three accounts are curious; they are not easily explained; but similar differences occur in different accounts of the same

events given by persons who may be supposed to have the best opportunities for knowing the precise facts.

On one January afternoon, during the sittings of the recent Royal Commission on Elementary Education, Lord Harrowby was in the Chair in the absence of Lord Cross, who was occupied with business at the India Office. The weather was cold; and I was standing at the fire immediately behind the Chairman. A messenger came in with a note, and Lord Harrowby, after reading it, turned round and handed it to me. It was from Lord Cross, and said that Lord Iddesleigh had just died suddenly at the *Foreign Office*. An hour or two later I bought an evening paper, which said that he had died at the *Treasury*. The evening paper was right and Lord Cross was wrong. And yet Lord Cross was a Cabinet Minister. Lord Iddesleigh had only just resigned a Cabinet office. The note was written a few minutes after Lord Iddesleigh's death, and within a few hundred yards of the office where he died.

I said to Lord Cross the next morning that if his note happened to survive a couple of hundred years, and to come into the hands of some historian who was investigating Lord Iddesleigh's life, it would be as perplexing as some of the 'discrepancies' in the Gospels. I suppose that in this case the explanation is that the clerk who told the news to Lord Cross had heard that Lord Iddesleigh had died suddenly during an interview with Lord Salisbury, and, as Lord Salisbury was Foreign Minister, the inference was unconsciously, but erroneously, drawn that the interview was at the Foreign Office. The unconscious and erroneous inference did not invalidate the substantial truth of the tragic story. Lord Iddesleigh was really dead, and he had died suddenly during an interview with Lord Salisbury. Such unconscious inferences will almost necessarily appear in the narratives even of careful eye-witnesses; sometimes the inferences will be accurate; but, when they are inaccurate, the substance of the story is unaffected.

The substantial historical trustworthiness of the Acts of the Apostles is also assumed in these Discourses. Evidence of various kinds has long been known demonstrating the trustworthiness of the second half of the book; and fresh evidence

of a striking kind has been adduced recently;[1] to keep the second half and to reject the first is a very illegitimate proceeding.

It is also assumed that Paul wrote the Epistles attributed to him in our Authorised and Revised Versions of the New Testament, with the exception of the Epistle to the Hebrews; that John wrote the Revelation and the three epistles bearing his name, though the genuineness of the second and third is of very little importance in the determination of John's doctrine; that Peter wrote the first of the two epistles attributed to him, and that the Epistle of James was written by our Lord's 'brother,' the son of Joseph and Mary, or the son of Joseph by a former wife. The Epistle to the Hebrews is by an unknown writer, but it is of great value as representing what is obviously a very early form of Christian thought. The Epistle of Jude and the second Epistle of Peter cannot, with any great confidence, be ascribed to their traditional authors. If I have quoted either of them, it has been for purposes of illustration, and because they supplied convenient phrases for expressing truths which rest on better authority—not for purposes of proof.

Nor, indeed, do I think that for the purposes of these Discourses it would have been absolutely necessary to quote any of Paul's epistles, except the four whose genuineness is practically uncontested—the Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans. About the genuineness of the others, including the three Pastoral Epistles, I have no doubt; but though it would be an immense loss to the Church if the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians were uncertain, I believe that, from the four uncontested Epistles and from the experience of the Christian Church, it would be possible largely to supply the loss.

In the attempt to state and support the several doctrines treated in this volume, I have made no use of any *proofs* that might have been derived from the books of the Old Testament. *Christian* doctrine is to be found in the Christian Scriptures. I am infinitely far from wishing to detach God's

[1] W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, before A.D. 170 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893).

revelation of Himself in Christ from the revelation of Himself to Israel; but the earlier revelation was rudimentary; it was a preparation for the later; *truth*, as well as grace, came by Jesus Christ. At the present time, controversies concerning the authorship and the dates of a large number of the books of the Old Testament have created in many minds a vague distrust of the whole of them; and if I had used any of the books as *authorities* for doctrine it would have been necessary to discuss difficult critical questions which are very far from being finally closed, and also to enter into wide discussions concerning the nature and functions of Jewish prophecy. The relevance and value of the quotations which I have made from the Old Testament, for the purpose of illustrating Jewish thought, are not affected by any critical controversies.

I do not assume the inspiration of even the New Testament Scriptures. To myself these writings contain their own evidence that they came from men to whom the glory of Christ and the realities of God's invisible and eternal kingdom had been revealed in a very wonderful and exceptional way; but for the purposes of these Discourses it is unnecessary to assume that either Gospels or Epistles were written with the special assistance or under the special control of the Spirit of God.

To recapitulate: it is assumed that in the Four Gospels we have a substantially trustworthy account of the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ; that in the Acts of the Apostles we have a substantially trustworthy account of the history of the early Church; that in the writings of the New Testament, which I have enumerated, we have the actual teaching of John and of Peter who were among the original apostles, of Paul who declared that he had received his apostolic commission from the Living and Glorified Christ, and of James, 'the brother of our Lord.' From these writings we have to learn what kind of a life our Lord lived, and what He taught, by what death He died, and what followed His death and burial. Practically, we have no other sources of information about Him. If these writings are not, in substance, trustworthy, our whole knowledge of Him perishes. From these writings, too, we have to learn what testimony the original apostles gave to our Lord; what they said that He had taught; and what they said that He had done for the

human race; the kind of life which He had required His disciples to live; and what, according to Him, men have to hope for and to fear in the world to come.

The books cohere. The Churches at Thessalonica, at Corinth, at Rome, at Ephesus, at Colosse, at Philippi, and the Churches in Galatia, with the Epistles addressed to them, cannot be accounted for, except by some such history as that which is contained in the Acts of the Apostles; nor can the Churches, the Epistles, and the story in the Acts be accounted for, except by some such gracious and Divine history as that which is related in the Four Gospels. Apart from the story—and the reality of the story—in the first four books of the New Testament, all the rest of the books are 'in the air.' They so hold together that decisive evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of two or three of the more important books constitutes decisive evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of nearly all the rest. They have vital relations to each other. They are like members of the same living body; the same arteries and nerves run through all of them. As long as any of them are really living, the rest must be living too.

But this is a digression: the point on which I am insisting is that the books of the New Testament are trustworthy authorities for the substance of the story of Christ, and for the original Christian Gospel.

NOTE F—PAGE 64.

THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR LORD'S KNOWLEDGE.

The question of the Limitations of our Lord's knowledge has recently been forced upon the Church in connection with critical controversies as to the date, origin, and authorship of certain parts of the Old Testament Scriptures. An attempt has been made to bar all investigation into the authorship of the Pentateuch, by alleging that our Lord Himself has authoritatively declared that, as a whole, it is the work of Moses, and His authority is also appealed to for attributing Psalm cx. to David—a question which is regarded as being of crucial importance in relation to the dates and authorship of a considerable number of the Psalms. Those who insist that these inquiries belong

to the province of scholarship, not to the province of Faith, are openly or implicitly charged with a want of reverence for our Lord. This policy of bringing the very ark of the covenant into the field, in order to decide the fortunes of such controversies as these is, in my judgment, equally illegitimate and perilous.

The inquiries which this policy renders inevitable are unwelcome to all those who worship the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and their Saviour, 'the effulgence' of the Father's 'glory' and 'the very image of His substance,' the Eternal Word who was 'with God,' and who 'was God,' but who for our salvation 'became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.' Reverence for Him would have restrained speculation on the limits of His human knowledge to the clear and direct evidence contained in the Four Gospels; but, when the appeal is made to His authority to determine critical controversies on the Old Testament Scriptures, we are forced, however reluctantly, to pursue the investigation further. In pursuing it we shall advance with faltering and hesitating steps—for what human thought can penetrate the august mysteries of the Incarnation?—and, from moment to moment, while we are considering to what humiliations He submitted in the greatness of His love for mankind, we shall cry, with wonder and fear, 'Thou art the King of glory, O Christ!'

But if we once acknowledge that the intellect of our Lord passed through the ordinary stages of human development, that He knew more when He was baptized in the Jordan and preached on the Mount, than when the wise men were offering Him homage at Bethlehem, or when He was presented in the temple; that to the end, there was at least one thing that He did not know—namely, the day and hour of His return to the world in glory—we shall hesitate to construct with confidence, any *a priori* theory as to what must have been the extent of the knowledge of a Divine Person who had become man. At most we shall decline to go beyond the conclusions suggested by the excellent passage quoted from Mr. Gore's Bampton Lecture at the end of this note.

If, however, we must speculate at all,—and the appeal to our Lord's authority on questions of Old Testament criticism compels speculation,—there are some inferences from the truth of the Incarnation which it seems difficult to resist.

It is true that, like John the Baptist, He was 'filled with the Holy Ghost, even from His mother's womb' (Luke i. 15), but neither to John nor to our Lord does this fulness of the Spirit appear to have given any exceptional knowledge of literature, history, or science; and while to our Lord it rendered possible a knowledge of the Father, the extent and depth of which we cannot measure, it did not break up, in His case, any more than in John's, the ordinary laws and limits of the human intellect.

As our Lord's body—if His human body was real—was fed, developed, and sustained by the ordinary food of Jewish children, by the common air, the common sunlight, and by the ordinary activities and pursuits of childhood, so we must suppose that His intellect—if His human intellect was real—was developed and invigorated by the ordinary forces which developed and invigorated the intellect of 'His brethren, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas.' He shared with them the teaching of Mary; He worshipped with them in the synagogue; He, like them, was under the power of the historical associations of the country in the neighbourhood of Nazareth; He and they doubtless sat together on the hill which rises above the town and gazed with wonder and delight upon Mount Carmel with its great memories of Elijah, upon the blue of the Mediterranean and the snowy heights of Hermon. As an infant He, like them, had *learnt* to see; and in childhood He had shared with them all the common experiences by which the ear and the hand and the foot are trained to effective service, and by which the intellect is provoked to activity.

As a child—if He was really a child—He had to trust in the larger experience and knowledge of those who were older than Himself. He learnt from them what water it was safe to drink, what food it was safe to eat. The traditions for the guidance of practical life which are transmitted from generation to generation are part of the necessary equipment of every child that is born—without them children could not live; the traditions of the race and the family to which our Lord belonged were part of *His* equipment.

We think, as well as speak, in words; and our Lord used as the instrument, as well as the expression, of His thought, the ordinary language of His country and His time. But all human language is the record of the thoughts of men about the

universe and the life of man; and it shows in every part of it—in its separate words and in its structure—the limitations of the intellect by which it was created. Christ came to share our condition and therefore He spoke, not with 'the tongues of angels,' which may, perhaps, be free from implications of intellectual infirmity, but the common speech of the people of Galilee.

If all this is true, then, is there any irreverence in supposing that He accepted the general traditions of His people in provinces of life lying outside those high and divine regions which for Him were illuminated by the light of the Holy Ghost and the consciousness of His unique relations to the Father? Some of these traditions must—as it seems—have been part of His equipment for life in His childhood; at what time, and for what reason, did He become independent of them? And is it necessary to suppose that all the traditions which we must assume that He accepted in His childhood, and by which His practice as a child was guided, were true? Is it not conceivable, for example, that some spring which He was told that He might drink safely, was impure, and that some food which He was told was wholesome, was unwholesome? Is it any derogation from His divine greatness and glory to suppose that He may in these particulars have been involved in the intellectual errors of His family as part of the humiliation to which He submitted for our salvation? And if in what I have described as His traditional intellectual equipment there was any element of human error, what limits can we set to the possible presence of that error? May we not say that it was not *He* who was liable to error, but that He accepted, in regions outside the range of spiritual illumination, the defects and limitations of the intellectual condition of the race? These were part of His inheritance as man. For example: it is hardly conceivable that our Lord had no *working* conception of the order of the physical universe; but there is nothing in His recorded words to suggest that His conception was different from that which was common among His countrymen.

Knowing who He is, and for what purpose He came into the world, we may be certain that His knowledge was subject to no limitations which prevented Him from revealing to men the very righteousness and love and glory of God; but what right

have we to assume anything further? It is not clear that for these great purposes it was necessary that He should know the date and the authorship of every part of the Old Testament. Reverence for Christ in the mystery and glory of His voluntary humiliation would forbid and rebuke a too curious inquiry into the question how far that humiliation extended; but the inquiry is forced upon us; and, for my part, reverence for Him disinclines me to peril faith in His divinity by insisting that if He was divine He must necessarily have been master of all critical learning in relation to the Jewish Scriptures.

While vindicating freedom for criticism I must not be understood as regarding with any confidence all the conclusions on which the more 'advanced' critics of the Old Testament are in general agreement; criticism has not yet said its last word; and for myself I am disposed to wait for the revision and re-revision of the theories which now claim to be established.

The following is the passage in Mr. Gore's Bampton Lecture to which I referred earlier in this note:—

'Must we not admit that a fallible or peccable Christ, in the ordinary sense of those terms, has the same abstract character as the doctrine of the later dogmatists? Place yourself face to face with the Christ of the Gospels; let His words, His claim, His tone, make upon you their natural impression; and you will not, I believe, find that He will allow you to think of Him as either liable to sin, or liable to mislead. He never fears sin, or hints that He might be found inadequate to the tremendous charge He bore; He does not let us think of Him as growing better or as needing improvement, though He passes through each imperfect stage of manhood to completeness. He challenges criticism, He speaks as the invincible emancipator of man, the deliverer who binds the strong captor and spoils his goods. He appears in no relation to sin, but as the discerner, the conqueror, the judge of it, in all its forms and to the end of time. In the same way, whenever and whomsoever He teaches, it is in the tone which could only be morally justifiable in the case of one who taught without risk of mistake; claiming by His own inherent right the submission of the conscience and will and intellect of men. "Heaven and earth,"

He said, "shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."[1] "Lo," said His apostles, amazed at the openness and security with which He spoke before His passion, discerning their hearts and satisfying their doubts, "Now know we that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."[2]

'Indeed when men suggest fallibility in our Lord's teaching, or peccability in His character, it is as much in the teeth of the Gospel record, as when, on the other hand, they deny Him limitation of knowledge, or the reality of a human, moral trial in the days of His flesh. We will be true to the record, then, at all costs; and, resolved on this, let us approach the question how the two sides of the evidence are to combine into a unity in our conception of Christ's person.'

. . . . . .

'A divine motive caused the Incarnation. It was a deliberate act of God, "propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem"; it was a "means devised" for our recovery and our consummation, a means therefore directed and adapted in the divine wisdom to serve its purpose. That purpose included on the one side a clearer revelation of God's mind and being to man in terms intelligible to him, and, on the other hand, the exhibition of the true ideal of human nature. Now, for the first part of the purpose, for the unveiling of the divine character, what was necessary was that the humanity should reflect, without refracting, the Divine Being whose organ it was made. It could not be too pure a channel, too infallible a voice, provided it was really human and fitted to man. Thus in fact, in becoming incarnate, the Son of God retained and expressed His essential relation to the Father; he received therefore, as eternally, so in the days of His flesh, the consciousness of His own and of His Father's being, and the power to reveal that which he knew. "No man," He said, "knoweth the Father" (not knew, but knoweth) "save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Limited moreover, as we shall have occasion to remark, as is His disclosure of the unseen world, what He does disclose is in the tone of one who speaks "that he doth know and testifies that he hath seen': for example,

[1] Matt. xxiv. 35. [2] John xvi. 30.

"I say unto you, that in heaven the angels of the little ones do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." Plainly the continuous personality of the Son carried with it a consciousness, which, if the human nature was allowed to subject to limitation, it was not allowed to deface or to distort. What He teaches, He teaches so that we can depend upon it to the uttermost, and the fact is explained by the motive of the Incarnation.

'On the other hand, our Lord is to exhibit a true example of manhood—tried, progressive, perfected. For this purpose it was necessary that He should be without the exercise of such divine prerogatives as would have made human experience or progress impossible. He could not, as far as we can see, abiding in the exercise of an absolute consciousness, have grown in knowledge, or have prayed, "Father, if it be possible," or cried, "My God, my God, why"—He could not, that is, have passed through those very experiences which have brought Him closest to us in our spiritual trials.'

NOTE G—PAGE 67.

OUR LORD'S INDIGNATION AT THE GRAVE OF LAZARUS.

The explanation of John xi. 33, 38 given in the text is that which is given in substance by commentators, who in many respects are so dissimilar as Hengstenberg and Dr. Westcott. Luthardt describes 'the old method of understanding' the words as finding in them 'an anger on the part of Jesus at death and its power': to this he himself adheres, and he quotes a long list of authorities in support of it: 'Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine, Lyra, Erasmus, Calvin, Cornelius a Lapide; and most Lutheran commentators, as Calov, Ebrard, Olshausen, Besser, Gumlich, and also Kahnis.' I give the names from Luthardt: I have not verified them.

NOTE H—PAGE 70.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF OUR LORD.

Our Lord's temptations were real, but with Mr. Gore (see Note F) I feel that it is incongruous with the whole impres-

sion produced by the representation of our Lord in the Four Gospels to speak of Him as 'liable' either to error or to sin. I decline to choose between ascribing to Him either of the old alternatives, the *posse non peccare* or the *non posse peccare*—the being able not to sin or the not being able to sin. The alternatives are not exhaustive; they are metaphysical, not moral, alternatives; they are philosophical abstractions and do not cover the whole of life. There are men of whom it would be wholly inadequate to say that they were *able not to lie*; it would be nearer the truth to say that they were *not able* to lie; but this might imply that they were under a physical or metaphysical necessity disabling them from speaking falsely, and this account of them would be wholly inaccurate. They are not the less free because they 'cannot' speak falsely. Paradoxical as it may seem, moral inability may be the highest form of moral freedom.

NOTE I—PAGE 82.

PETER'S CONFESSION AND THE JEWISH CONCEPTION OF THE MESSIAH.

As I have said in the text (p. 82), Peter's great words, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' are 'a sufficient expression of our own faith in the true divinity of our Lord;' and they also show—especially when taken in connection with our Lord's reply: 'Blessed art thou Simon, Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven'—that Peter 'had caught sight of a great glory in Christ and knew that it was divine.' But that the words, at the time they were spoken, meant for Peter all that they came to mean for Peter himself after our Lord's Resurrection and all that they now mean to us, is more than improbable.

The Hebrew use of the word 'son' is remarkable, and has powerfully influenced the language of the New Testament. To Pharaoh, Moses, speaking in God's name, said 'Israel is my *son*, my firstborn' (Exod. iv. 24): and in Hosea God says 'I called my son out of Egypt,' Hos. xi. 1. And as the nation as a whole is described as God's son, God himself is described

as the Father of the nation (Deut. xxxii. 6-8). The people are also called God's children (Deut. xiv. 1). In all these, and in similar passages, a special relationship is declared to exist between God and Israel—a relationship not originating in the moral worth of Israel, but the result of God's free and gracious election. For the Jewish race, God had the affection of a father for his child; He would deal with it as a father deals with his child, caring for it, defending it, chastising it, bestowing on it His own wealth, and sharing with it His own honour. Israel had a nearer and happier relationship to God than that of other nations. To it, as Paul said, belonged 'the adoption' (Romans ix. 4).

While Israel, as a whole, stood in this glorious relationship to God, the relationship was to be realised in a special and higher form among the descendants of David: 'When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his *Father*, and he shall be My *son*.' If we assume that these words were fulfilled only in Christ, and could not belong in any sense to David's human descendants who occupied his throne, the assumption is checked at once by the words which immediately follow: 'if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee' (2 Sam. vii. 12-15). It is clear that the distinction and the blessedness of this promise did not imply that those who were to inherit it were to be of divine or even superhuman origin; some of them, at least, were not to be free from gross sins that would require severe chastisement.[1] But yet David's regal descendants were to be in a special sense 'sons' of God; God had 'adopted' them: His mercy would never wholly forsake them; in some wonderful way their dynasty and kingdom would be everlasting.

In the New Testament the word 'son' is used in a large

[1] It is taken for granted that the promise did not relate to Solomon alone, but to David's 'seed' generally who were to reign after him.

number of striking phrases whose meaning is perfectly plain, though there may be difficulty in defining it. There are 'the sons of light' (Luke xvi. 8, John xii. 36)—men who in the very centre of their life are akin to the light, and whose whole character and conduct are determined by it. There is the 'son of peace' (Luke x. 6)—the man whose very nature is kindly and disposed to peace. There are also 'sons of disobedience' (Eph. ii. 2)—men who do not disobey accidentally and under strong temptation, but because by their own nature they are inclined to disobey.

Our Lord said that His bitter and persistent enemies were of their 'father the devil' (John viii. 44)—not that they derived their being from him, but that as a son is often, in form and feature, very like his father, so they were so like the wicked one that they might be called his children. The tares in the parable are 'the sons of the evil one,' and the good seed are 'the sons of the kingdom' (Matt. xiii. 37, 38). The 'son of hell' (Matt. xxiii. 15) belongs by his nature and character to hell; the 'son of *perdition*' is by his nature and character destined to destruction. The pupils of the Rabbis are called their 'sons' (Luke xi. 19).

It was hardly necessary for the purpose of this note to give these illustrations of the freedom with which the word 'son' is used in the New Testament. It would have been sufficient to quote the great promise to David—a promise which was certain to be familiar to all devout Jews, and which shows decisively that the title 'Son of God,' even when attributed to a descendant of David, sitting on David's throne, and reigning over the kingdom which was to be made sure 'for ever,' did not necessarily imply what we mean when we attribute the title to our Lord.

The question whether the Jewish people in the time of our Lord believed that the Messiah would be a Divine Person is often confused with a question wholly different—whether in Jewish *prophecy* the Messiah is represented as divine. The second question is not free from difficulty. Oehler, in his *Theology of the Old Testament* (translated by Sophia Taylor. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1875), says with great truth that, 'The consummation of redemption is, according to prophetic intuition, introduced on the one hand by the *personal coming* of *Jehovah* in His glory, but on the other by the coming

of a *King of the race of David, the Messiah'* (vol. ii. p. 406). According to the former view, as Oehler goes on to say, Jehovah appears to set up His kingdom on earth, amidst the rejoicings of all creation (Psalm xlvi. 10, 11; xcviii. 6, 9). It is Jehovah Himself whose feet are 'to stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives' (Zech. xiv. 4). He will be a 'wall of fire' round about Jerusalem, and 'the glory in the midst of her' (Zech. ii. 5). Jerusalem, according to Jeremiah (chap. iii. 16, 17), is to be called the throne of the Lord, and He will be so manifestly present in the city that the ark will no longer be necessary as a visible symbol and assurance of His covenant with His people. But, 'while prophecy thus regards the communion into which God will in the time of redemption enter with His people as of the most direct possible kind, it, on the other hand, comparatively annuls this directness by another view which runs parallel with the former. According to this view, a distinguished servant of Jehovah, a *Son of David* in whom Jehovah rules and blesses His people, is the medium by whom the consummation of redemption . . . is brought to pass.' The two views are placed in juxtaposition in Ezek. xxxiv. The Lord there declares Himself against the unfaithful shepherds of His people, who have suffered them to perish. He will, it is at first said in v. 11, *Himself* undertake the care of the sheep ('I, myself, even I, will search for my sheep and seek them out,' etc.). But then the prophecy turns directly in v. 23 to the other view, 'I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them and he shall be their shepherd.'

There is no real contradiction between these two lines of prophecy. God Himself delivered His people out of Egypt, but Moses was, under God, the agent of their deliverance; and so, only divine power and grace were equal to the glorious redemption which the elect race was hoping for, and yet that grace and power might conceivably work with and through a human Messiah.

The real difficulty occurs in passages in which the Messiah is completely identified with God Himself; when instead of distinguishing, as is the habit of prophecy, between Jehovah and the great heir of David's hopes who is to establish the enduring kingdom, the two are blended into one. There are several passages of this kind. The most remarkable is that in Isaiah

ix. 6, 7: 'For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever.' It is an amazing passage. The glory of the Eternal descends upon the Prince who belongs to the house of David and sits on David's throne; and his human limitations are lost in the splendour. He and God appear to the prophet so completely one that divine titles are given to Him. And yet the distinction between the Prince and Jehovah is not wholly forgotten; for the prophet adds: 'The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this' (v. 7).

But are we to suppose that the people who heard and read these wonderful words found in them what *we* find, now that they have been illustrated by the Incarnation? Are we to suppose that the prophet himself found in them what we find? I think not, and for this reason among others. The idea of the actual incarnation of a divine person is an idea of such power and such fruitfulness that if it had ever really come to the mind of a prophet and been clearly apprehended by him, it would not have appeared in two or three isolated passages, but would have affected the whole substance of subsequent prophecy. The prophet himself would have returned to it again and again, with exultation and wonder. Later prophets would have caught the fire. The flame once kindled would have blazed far and wide, and the whole field of prophecy would have been filled with its glory.

Delitzsch, in his commentary on Isaiah ix. 6, says: 'If we look at the spirit of the prophecy, the mystery of the incarnation of God is unquestionably indicated in such statements as these. But if we look at the consciousness of the prophet himself, nothing further was involved than this, that the Messiah would be the image of God as no other man had been (comp. *El* (God) Psalm lxxxii. 1), and that He would have God dwelling within Him (comp. Jer. xxxiii. 16). Who else should lead Israel to victory over the hostile world than God the Mighty? The Messiah is the corporeal presence of this

mighty God; for He is with him, He is in him, and in him He is with Israel. The expression did not preclude the fact that the Messiah would be God and Man in one person; but it did not penetrate to this depth so far as the Old Testament consciousness was concerned.'

If we pass now from the impression which the Old Testament might have produced on the mind of the people as to the personality of the Messiah to the opinions actually current in Judea at the time of our Lord's appearance, the materials at our command are not sufficiently abundant or sufficiently certain in their date to justify any confident conclusion. The Gospels themselves suggest that there were different currents of thought agitating the mind of the people. On the one hand the claims of our Lord were objected to on the ground that He came from Galilee, and, as the people supposed, was born there: 'Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?' (John vii. 42.) And this was the expectation of 'the chief priests and scribes,' whom Herod consulted when he was disturbed by the visit of the wise men from the East: they told him that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. ii. 5), and quoted the prophecy of Micah (chap. v. 2) which declared that the Ruler of Israel, whose 'goings forth are from old, from everlasting,' was to be born there. On the other hand there were some who believed that 'when the Christ cometh no man knoweth whence He is' (John vii. 27); He would appear in some mysterious way, detached from all the ordinary relations of men, His kindred, if He had any, unknown, and his birthplace unknown.

No light on the subject is given by the answer of the 'multitude' when our Lord spoke of being 'lifted up from the earth.' They said, 'We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? who is this Son of Man?' We know from other sources that there was a belief among the Jews that the kingdom of the Messiah would be an enduring kingdom, and that the Messiah's reign would be indefinitely prolonged; but this belief was quite separable from the idea of His pre-existence, and even from the idea that His person was to be superhuman.

Nor are we helped by the adjuration of the high-priest when our Lord was standing before the Jewish Council—'Tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God' (Matt. xxvi. 63), or, as Mark reports it, 'Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' (Mark xiv. 61); for the title 'the Son of God,' or 'the Son of the Blessed' may have meant no more on the lips of the high-priest than it meant on the lips of Nathan in the great promise to David (2 Sam. vii. 14). That the Christ was to be in some great sense the Son of God appeared in several passages of Old Testament prophecy; but it is not clear that the Jews found anything more in the title than a declaration that 'He would be the perfect realisation of the character of the theocratic king. He would stand in a peculiar relationship of union with and dependence upon Jehovah. The stamp of God's authority would be visibly upon Him; the favour of God would be manifestly with Him.'[1]

Nor can the question be determined by pre-Christian literature, not included in the canon of the Old Testament. Schürer in his great work, *A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, has the following important passage: 'Whether pre-Christian Judaism regarded the Messiah as simply human, or as a being of a higher order, and especially whether it attributed to Him pre-existence, cannot, with the uncertainty about the dates of authorities, be positively decided. *The original Messianic hope did not expect an individual Messiah at all, but theocratic kings of the house of David. Subsequently* the hope was consolidated and raised more and more into the expectation of *a personal Messiah*, as a Ruler endowed by God with special gifts and powers. In the time of Christ this form had at all events long been the prevailing one. But this naturally implies that the picture would more and more acquire superhuman features. The more exceptional the position awarded to the Messiah, the more does He Himself step forth from ordinary human limits. In the freedom with which the religious circle of ideas moved this was effected in a very different fashion. In general, however, *the Messiah was*

[1] Vincent Henry Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, p. 147 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1886). This is a most interesting and valuable book.

thought of as a human king and ruler, but as one endowed by God with special gifts and powers.'[1]

In the so-called *Fourth Book of Ezra*, which appears in our Apocrypha as the *Second Book of Esdras*, the Messiah is frequently addressed as My Son,[2] and once at least in the Book of Enoch (chap. xv. 2), the same expression occurs, but, as Schürer says, 'the official predicate tells us nothing at all of His nature';[3] and, further, the *Fourth Book of Ezra* was not written till towards the close of the first century; Schürer places it in the reign of Domitian.'[4]

If it were certain that the *Book of Enoch*—or rather that section of it which includes chaps. xxxvii.-lxxi., and known as the '*Similitudes*' or the *Book of the three Parables*—was pre-Christian there would be decisive evidence that, before the coming of our Lord, the Jewish people, or some of them, had reached the conclusion that the Messiah was not only to be a superhuman Person, but that He was to descend from Heaven. In the 'Similitudes' the Messiah, who is called 'the Son of man,' is described as existing 'before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars were made . . . before the creation of the world, and for evermore' (chap. xlviii. 3-6). Mr. Charles, the latest English editor of the *Book of Enoch* and a strong advocate for the pre-Christian origin of the contested section, says that 'The Messianic Doctrine in xxxvii.-lxx. is unique, not only as regards the other sections of Enoch, but also in Jewish literature as a whole.'[5] He assigns the section to B.C. 94-B.C. 79.[6] Schürer, while admitting that this section is of later date than the original work, contends 'that the view of the Messiah presented in the part of the book now under consideration is perfectly explicable on Jewish grounds, and that, to account for such view it is not necessary to

[1] Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II. vol. ii. p. 159 (T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh).

[2] Chapters i. and ii., xv. and xvi. of this book are additions to the original work, and are clearly by a Christian hand. In chap. vii. 28, the word Jesus is an obvious interpolation.

[3] Schürer, *Ibid.* Div. II. vol. ii. p. 160.

[4] *Ibid.* Div. II. vol. iii. p. 108.

[5] R. H. Charles, the *Book of Enoch*, p. 107 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893).

[6] *Ibid.* p. 108.

assume that it was due to Christian influence,' but he believes that on the question whether it was of pre-Christian origin 'it is unfortunately extremely difficult' to arrive at any positive decision.[1] Dr. Stanton is of opinion that the evidence is very definitely in favour of the theory that the section belongs to the latter part of the first century, and finds in it 'traits of an Essene character, more especially the lore about the angels'; and, as the Essenes and the Jewish Christians 'seem to have come specially into contact,' he believes that the 'Similitudes,' though not of Christian authorship, show the influence of Christian ideas.[2] The principal conclusions to be drawn from this investigation are :—

(1) That apart from that section of the *Book of Enoch* whose pre-Christian origin is doubtful, there is no evidence that the Jews in the time of our Lord believed that their Messiah would be a Person who had existed before He came into this world, or that He would be a superhuman Person.

That if the pre-Christian origin of the 'Similitudes' is admitted, there is still no evidence that they believed that He would be a Divine Person. That, therefore, Peter's acknowledgment that our Lord was 'the Christ' does not prove that Peter already knew that our Lord had existed in Heaven before His birth at Bethlehem, or that His nature was divine. The confession that He was 'the Christ,' was an acknowledgment that He had a divine commission and was endowed with superhuman power to accomplish that final redemption which was the supreme hope of Israel.

(2) That Peter's ascription to his Master of the title 'Son of God,' or 'Son of the Living God,' as illustrated by the use of the word 'Son' both in the Old Testament and the New, and especially by the great promise to David (2 Sam. vii. 12-14), does not prove that Peter already knew that our Lord was a Divine Person. It only proves, to quote the words of Dr. Stanton, some of which have been previously quoted in this Note, that Peter believed that our Lord stood in 'a peculiar relationship of union and dependence upon Jehovah.' 'The stamp of God's authority' was 'visibly upon Him'; 'the favour of God' was 'manifestly with Him.' He stood in that special

[1] Schürer, Div. II. vol. iii. p. 68.

[2] Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, pp. 60-64.

relationship to Jehovah which had been imperfectly illustrated in David's successors on the throne of Israel, and which was to be perfectly illustrated in Him.

(3) But, finally, the warmth of approval with which our Lord received Peter's confession is a clear indication that, by the illumination of God, Peter had discovered in Jesus of Nazareth a divine glory transcending all that the Jewish people of that age expected in the Messiah. The discovery may have been too vague—I believe that it was much too vague—to have enabled Peter to address his Master at that time as Thomas addressed Him after the Resurrection, and to call Him 'My Lord and my God'; but it contained the germ and the substance of the faith which Thomas was the first to express, —the faith which enabled the apostles to defy all the powers of the world.

NOTE K—PAGE 68.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

It is worth while to examine carefully the principal examples of apostolic preaching given in the Acts of the Apostles. To the multitude that came together on the day of Pentecost, Peter spoke of Jesus of Nazareth, not as God, but as 'a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you;' declared that He was God's 'Holy One'—a descendant of David and destined to sit on David's throne; and that, though He had been crucified and slain by the hand of 'lawless men,' He was not left in Hades nor did His flesh see corruption. God had raised Him from the dead, and 'being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear . . . let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.'[1] To the crowd that 'ran together' in Solomon's porch after the healing of the lame man who had been accustomed to beg 'at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful,' Peter said that, in the miracle which had excited their wonder, the God of their

[1] Acts ii. 22-36.

fathers 'had glorified His Servant Jesus,' 'the Holy and Righteous One,' 'the Prince of Life;' that Jesus was the Christ who had been 'appointed' for them; that God, 'having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless' them 'in turning away every one' of them 'from their iniquities.'[1] When the apostles were brought before the high priest and the council, and were reminded that they had already been charged to cease preaching to the people about Jesus who had been crucified, Peter and the rest answered: 'We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.'[2] This was the substance of the Gospel that Peter preached to Cornelius, but he added that our Lord 'was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and dead.'[3]

Paul's preaching was in substance the same. In the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, he argued that ancient prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus; and said, 'Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins.'[4] At Athens on the Areopagus he said nothing about our Lord's divinity, but, after a noble argument against idolatry, declared that 'The times of this ignorance, therefore, God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.'[5]

And in Paul's own summary of the Gospel which he had preached to the Corinthians, he says: 'I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures;' then follows an account of our Lord's appearance after the resurrection to Cephas, 'to the twelve,' to 'the five hundred at once,' 'to James,' then to 'all of the apostles,' and 'last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also.'[6]

[1] Acts iii. 11-26. [2] *Ibid.* v. 30, 31. [3] *Ibid.* x. 42.
[4] *Ibid.* xiii. 38. [5] *Ibid.* xvii. 30, 31. [6] 1 Cor. xv. 3-8.

NOTE L—PAGE 93.

THE NICENE CREED.

The Nicene Creed, as recited in the Roman Mass and in the Communion Service of the English Church, is not quite the same as that which was adopted by the great Council held A.D. 325. The famous Creed is known to us in three forms.

(1) There is the original creed adopted at Nicæa. The creed proper ended with the words 'in the Holy Ghost,' and then came a series of anathemas directed against the errors of Arius.

(2) There is the enlarged and revised creed, said to have been adopted by the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381, but which depends for its ecumenical authority upon the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. This is the form of the creed still used by the Eastern Church.

The verbal modifications in the earlier sections of the original creed which were sanctioned at Chalcedon cannot be conveniently exhibited in this Note, and they do not touch the substance of doctrine; but the additions were important. The original creed ended, as I have said, with the words [I believe] 'in the Holy Ghost;' the following clauses were added: 'the Lord and Giver of life who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the Resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.' The anathemas were omitted.

The history of the changes and additions which were accepted by the Council of Chalcedon is obscure. At that Council, Aëtius, Archdeacon of Constantinople, submitted what professed to be a revised and enlarged form of the Nicene Creed, which he said had been adopted by a Council held in Constantinople, A.D. 381. The statement of Aëtius appears to be absolutely unsupported, and it does not seem very probable that a Council consisting of only 150 bishops, and all of these from the East, would have presumed to make substantial additions to such a great and famous creed as that of Nicæa; and there

are other objections to the theory. Ecclesiastical scholars have given another account of the origin of this Creed.

(3) There is the form in present use by the Roman Church, the English Church, and other Churches of the West. In this form the Holy Spirit is declared to proceed from the Father '*and the Son.*' This addition is one of the standing grounds of separation between the East and the West. When the words were first introduced into the creed is doubtful. The first certain trace of the interpolation occurs in the acts of a Council held at Toledo, A.D. 589, which definitely anathematised those who refused to believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. The interpolated creed seems to have spread rapidly in Spain. In their conflict with Arianism, the orthodox may have thought that the interpolation strengthened their hands. From Spain it passed into France, Germany, and England. Pope after Pope, even though believing in the 'double procession,' condemned and protested against its insertion in the Creed; but at last Rome had to give way. About A.D. 1014, Pope Benedict VIII., under the pressure of the emperor, consented to use the interpolated creed in the service of the Mass. There is another, but less important difference between the Western and the Eastern forms of the symbol. The words 'God of God' which appear in the Western form do not appear in the Eastern: the later clause, 'very God of very God,' which appears in both creeds, renders them unnecessary.

A large mass of curious information on the Literary history and Liturgical use of the creed has been collected in Dr. Swainson's *Nicene and Apostles' Creeds* (London: Murray, 1875). There is a brief and clear account of the principal outlines of the history in Dr. Schaff's *History of the Creeds of Christendom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878).

NOTE M—PAGE 111.

THE AUTHORITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CHURCH.

Some of the kindest critics of former volumes of mine have supposed that I disparage the function of the Church as 'the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Tim. iii. 15). But I, too,

believe, as firmly and as earnestly as any member of the Roman or of the Anglican Communion, that the Church is 'the house of God,' the congregation of 'the Living God' (1 Tim. iii. 15); I, too, believe that the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ has been fulfilled to the Church of every country and of every age: 'when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth' (John xvi. 13). The difference between us relates to the manner in which we are to ascertain what the Spirit of God has, through age after age, revealed to the Church. The subject is much too large to be adequately discussed in a note; but what seems to me to be the true method may perhaps be defined in a few sentences.

I admit frankly that there is something which appeals with great power to the Christian imagination in the theory of the authority which is attributed to a General Council. It is assumed that the bishops of the Catholic Church, standing in regular succession from the apostles, are the heirs of apostolic authority and of apostolic traditions. Individual bishops may, as the result of many causes—as the result of individual temperament, or of defective fidelity to Christ, or of too adventurous speculation, or of adverse influences which affected their early education, or of the spirit and temper of the particular part of the Church in which they are placed—err from the faith, and their errors may be more or less grave. But when the bishops from every part of Catholic Christendom are gathered into a council, and are aided by the presence and suggestions of eminent theologians and saints, their individual idiosyncrasies correct and cancel each other; they invoke and they receive the illumination of the Holy Ghost; they become the trustworthy organs of the life and faith of the universal church; their definition of truth should, therefore, be received with perfect submission as expressing the mind of the Spirit and as asserting 'the faith once for all delivered unto the saints' (Jude 3).

This theory appeals, I say, with great power to the Christian imagination. But if we examine the actual history of a General Council, and of the Creed to which it has given authority, the majestic and lofty theory falls to pieces. Take, for example, the Council and Creed of Nicæa. When we consider the fierce mutual personal animosities of the assembled bishops, animosi-

ties which broke out into accusations and memorials addressed to the emperor before the council opened;—when we consider the turbulence, excitement, and passion with which the debates were conducted, the immense influence exerted by Constantine, for political reasons, to secure unanimity,[1] and the reluctance with which, under the pressure of that influence, the creed was signed by a bishop and theologian of the eminence of Eusebius of Cesarea;—when we consider further the great reaction which set in against the orthodox position soon after the council broke up; the obscure history of the changes in the creed sanctioned by the Council of Chalcedon; the causes which led to the introduction of the doctrine of 'the double procession' into the Nicene Creed, as now used by Western Christendom;—it is very difficult to think of the Council itself as the inspired organ of the faith of the universal Church, or to think of the Creed, either in its original form, or as it is now recited in the offices of the Roman and Anglican Churches, as having the kind of authority with which the theory of a General Council invests it. That in later ages, and among churches separated from each other by great differences of polity and history, the main propositions of the creed have secured substantial acceptance is, however, a fact of very considerable significance; for it shows that the creed has been found to represent in substance the great truths which have been verified in the life of the commonalty of the Church.

I find 'the pillar and ground of the truth' in the actual life of those who have received the Christian salvation. The biography of saints is a higher authority than the decrees of councils. If through age after age, men living in different countries, belonging to different races, disciplined under different conditions, associated with churches separated from

[1] The whole theory becomes more amazing when we remember (1) the immense and critical importance attached by the members of the Council and the whole Church of that age to Christian baptism, and (2) that it was not till many years after the Council broke up that Constantine was baptized. The chief person in the sacred assembly, the person whose influence was indispensable to secure the large measure of unanimity with which the Creed was adopted, was an unbaptized, and therefore, according to the belief of the Council, an unregenerate man.

each other by long-standing and bitter controversies, agree in declaring that they have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, and that, in answer to their trust, they were released from the sense and burden of their guilt, and found peace with God; that they trusted Him for life and strength to do the will of God, and that the life and strength were given; if it is apparent that the more vehement their affection for Him, and the more complete their devotion to Him, the loftier were their attainments in righteousness; if, under different and even conflicting, forms of theological statement, there is a singular and surprising unity in their testimony that they themselves found access to God and deliverance from sin, as well as the remission of guilt, through the Lord Jesus Christ,—these facts appear to me to be of immense importance as confirming, establishing, and illustrating the contents of the original Christian Gospel. For me, the doctrinal authority of the Church lies in the experience of the Church. Its experience constitutes its authority—the experience of the commonalty of those who have received the Christian redemption. I listen with respect to the early Fathers in whose teaching it is reasonable to suppose that the large outlines of apostolic tradition have been preserved; but while listening to them I feel at liberty to discriminate between what obviously belongs to the tradition and what seems to have been derived from other sources. I listen with respect to the great theologians of all churches; but I claim perfect freedom to discuss and dispute their interpretations of Holy Scripture, to criticise their methods, and to test the strength of their logic. But the actual experience of penitents and saints is sacred to me; even in this I must endeavour to distinguish between the divine substance and the human forms in which it appears; but I must do it reverently, for when we are in immediate contact with the divine life of man, we are in contact with the presence and power of the Spirit of God. The *Confessions* of Augustine are of more authority than his theological treatises. Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* is of more authority than Calvin's *Institutes*. I believe in the inspiration of the Church, and I find that inspiration in its life.

NOTE N—PAGE 123.

ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN NATURE OF OUR LORD.

On page 53 there is a brief account of the doctrine of Eutyches, who was condemned for confusing and confounding the Human with the Divine Nature of our Lord, and representing the nature of the Incarnate Christ as being neither divine nor human, but a third nature, a compound of both, as Electron is a mixed metal formed by melting together silver and gold. This theory was a vehement and extreme reaction against Nestorianism.[1] Nestorius was patriarch of Constantinople early in the fifth century; in his eagerness to vindicate the reality and integrity of our Lord's human nature against Apollinaris (see p. 51), he not only attributed to our Lord a complete Humanity—Body, Soul, and Spirit—but exposed himself to the charge of representing the Humanity as constituting a separate Personality. From this charge he, or at all events his followers, endeavoured to escape; but the substance of his doctrine appears to have been that God dwelt in Christ but did not really become man: He dwelt in Christ as a god may be conceived as dwelling in his temple without becoming the temple. 'He never arrived,' says Dr. Dorner, 'at an Incarnation of God, but only at a relationship between two natures which continue separate—a relationship which he terms a mysterious "conjunction."'[2]

The relation of the Human to the Divine Nature of our Lord is still one of the most perplexing problems of Theology. During the last half century what is known as the doctrine of the *Kenosis*[3] has been maintained by a large number of eminent theologians. The doctrine has received various forms; but substantially they all agree in representing the Divine Ego of the Son—the I—as renouncing when He

[1] Theodore of Mopsuestia had taught 'Nestorianism' before Nestorius.

[2] Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Div. II. vol. i. p. 55. See also preceding pages.

[3] The term is derived from the verb used by Paul in Phil. ii. 7. Paul says that our Lord '*emptied* (ekenōsĕ) Himself,' etc. The *Kenosis* is this great renunciation of divine glory.

became incarnate, not only the exercise but the possession of the divine attributes.[1]

The traditional theory of the Christian Church is,—not that the Eternal Son of God when He became man parted with His divine consciousness and ceased to exercise His divine powers,—but that He added the consciousness and experience of a really human life, with all its limitations, to His eternal consciousness of blessedness and glory. The same Personality was the centre of two natures—the divine and the human; exerted two parallel activities—did not cease to act as God but began also to act as man; was conscious of two parallel experiences—of divine blessedness and of human sorrow, weariness, and pain. He was God and remained God; but He became man. This, I say, as contrasted with the doctrine of the *Kenosis*, is the traditional belief of the Christian Church.

There are two technical words which are constantly used in this inquiry, and it is necessary to distinguish accurately between them—Nature and Person. 'Nature' or substance, to use the convenient definition of Dr. Schaff, in explaining the position of the Council of Chalcedon, 'denotes the totality of powers and qualities which constitute a being; while Person is the Ego, the self-conscious, self-asserting, and acting subject.'[2]

It is unfortunate, for many reasons, that the term Person has been used in this sense; but in discussions on the Person of Christ and on the Trinity it is important to disregard its ordinary meaning and to remember that it stands for that central point in which the powers and qualities of a being have their unity. And in this sense the Person of Christ is divine; the Person who from Eternity had had a Divine Nature and who retained that Nature, assumed human nature, 'became flesh' in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole subject is profoundly mysterious; but while we must reverently acknowledge that we are unable to com-

[1] M. Gretillat, the eminent professor at Neuchatel who has very recently died, defined his own position with great clearness in the following words: 'Nous avons à etablir qu'il y a eu renonciation du moi divin à la fois à l'usage et à la possession des attributes de cette nature'—meaning, the attributes of the divine nature. *Exposé de Théologie Systématique*; Paris, 1890, Tom. iv^me. p. 180.

[2] *History of the Creeds of Christendom*, p. 30 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877).

prehend it, we may without irreverence criticise any human explanation of it. What then, it may be asked, on the theory of the Kenosis, became of those divine powers and qualities which the Eternal Son of God renounced, laid aside, when He became incarnate? Did they cease to be, during the three-and-thirty-years of His earthly life? Did they once more begin to be, when that earthly life was ended? Or, if they continued to be, during the interval, how is it conceivable that powers and qualities could exist apart from the Person to whom they belonged?

The language of Paul, in Phil. ii. 7 and in 2 Cor. viii. 9 gives strong support to the Kenotic theory; but it is at least consistent with the traditional belief. The Eternal Son added the experience and consciousness of poverty in one sphere of life to the consciousness of divine blessedness in another; in His earthly manifestation and activity He laid aside His glory and took 'the form of a servant.' And it is difficult to believe that Paul really held that during His earthly life He ceased, in the divine sphere of His activity, to exert His divine powers. For it was Paul's faith that in Him 'all things consist'—are sustained and held together in their divinely determined order. The powers by which from age to age He sustains and holds together the whole creation were still exerted while He 'dwelt among us,' or the creation would have sunk back into chaos. Can we conceive that His 'powers' were still active when they had ceased to be His? Or, if they were still active, can we conceive that He was unconscious of their activity?

There are other objections to the theory. It affirms that the divine and personal centre of our Lord's life had renounced all divine qualities and powers; its whole manifestation, therefore, was human. But while our Lord was truly man, was there not something unique in His perfection? Was His perfection nothing more than a high degree of human saintliness? While the *forms* under which He thought and felt and acted were human, was there not something in their *contents* which transcended humanity? 'We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father' (John i. 14). 'The eternal life which was with the Father . . . was manifested unto us' (1 John i. 2). His knowledge of the Father was something different in kind from that which comes to a saint through the

illumination of the Holy Spirit; the knowledge was human in its intellectual forms, but it was drawn, as the knowledge of saints is not drawn, from a consciousness which appears to have had some share in the very life and thought of the Eternal. His relations to the Father, relations realised in thought and affection and feeling, were more intimate than those of saints; *His* relations to the Father are immediate; *theirs* are in and through Him.

The mystery is impenetrable. We cannot hope to understand how human nature still retaining human limitations can be drawn into union with the life of the Eternal, or how the life of the Eternal can be drawn into union with human nature. We can but contemplate with reverence and joy the revelation of the wonder. A glory from God rests on the Son of His love. The Son knows that He is one with the Father. It is as if with the gradual unfolding of His intellectual and moral powers He gradually became conscious, under human conditions, of His eternal life with God. This, at least, seems to be suggested by the facts of His earthly history. He was divine in the centre of His life, and He knew that He was divine; He was conscious of sharing the life of God.

NOTE O—PAGE 123.

THE RECOVERY OF FAITH IN THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD.

As the whole argument of this discourse implies, I believe that when faith in Christ as 'very God of very God' has been lost or shaken, its vigour is not to be restored by arguments which 'demonstrate' His divinity. It is by the same path along which in the first ages the Christian Church travelled to the substance of the faith of Nicæa, that individual men in our own times are to travel to it; that is, by discovering that He is the Lord of conduct, the Propitiation for the sins of the world, and the Giver of Eternal Life; He must be actually obeyed as having supreme authority over life, must be actually trusted as the divine reason for the remission of sins and as the Giver of the Divine Life. When the reality and greatness of His redemptive powers are known by experience, a man will have no great difficulty in believing, on the authority of the words of our Lord in the Four Gospels, that He will raise the dead and judge

the world. These spiritual relations to Christ receive their intellectual interpretation in the doctrine of His divinity. The doctrine is an empty form where they are not present; and where they are present the substance of the doctrine is believed, though every theological statement of it appears to be surrounded by difficulties which make it incredible. It is an immense gain for the intellect to receive and grasp the doctrine; but the supreme thing is for Christ to be really God to the affections, the conscience, and the will. He whom I obey as the supreme authority over my life, He whom I trust for the pardon of my sins, He to whom I look for the power to live righteously, He to whose final judgment I am looking for eternal blessedness or eternal destruction,—He, by whatever I may call Him, is my God. If I attribute the *name* to another, I attribute to Christ the reality for which the name stands: and unless, for me, Christ is one with the Eternal, He is really above the Eternal—has diviner prerogatives and achieves diviner works.

NOTE P—PAGE 128.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

To the Jew, the Heavens and the Earth were not eternal; nor did they come into existence by the necessary and unconscious action of forces which were not under the direction of a supreme Intelligence; nor were they emanations of the eternal life of God. According to the conception which has received such a noble imaginative form in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, the universe is the free creation of a personal God. To the Hebrew, God stood apart from the world and infinitely above it. But what we should call a 'Force' passed from Him to the material universe, gave it form and originated every description of life. This is what is meant in Gen. i. 2, where it is said that when 'the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, "*the Spirit of God*" moved upon the face of the waters.' This again is what is meant in Job xxvi. 13: 'By His Spirit the Heavens are garnished.' Divine power working according to the divine will created all things. The universe has what has been called a 'relative independence,' and yet as God called it into existence and determined its order, so God maintains its existence and its

order from age to age. It could not continue to be if He did not continue to sustain it. Speaking of all forms of life on the earth and in the sea, a Psalmist says : 'That Thou givest them they gather ; Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ; Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou *sendest forth Thy Spirit*, they are created ; and Thou renewest the face of the ground' (Ps. civ. 28, 30). This divine activity of the Spirit of God extended, according to Hebrew thought, through the whole universe. Nowhere, either in heaven above or in the dark abodes of the dead, was it possible to escape from it, 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there : if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there' (Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8). It would be too much to say that the Hebrew believed in 'the immanence of God' in the visible universe ; 'immanence' stands for a philosophical conception, very remote from the the Hebrew mind ; and yet since the Hebrew spoke of the 'Spirit' of God rather than of the 'Power' of God as creating and sustaining all things, he made an approach to the philosophical theory. Those theologians who have said that 'the Spirit of God' in the Old Testament does not stand for a distinct Divine Person but for the one God, as 'immanent' in the material universe and in the physical, the intellectual, and the religious life of man, grasped one side of Hebrew thought. But the 'immanence' of God in the Creation carries with it the idea of a permanent activity determined by fixed laws, and this is not the form in which the divine activity was conceived by the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures. They represent 'the Spirit' as given and withdrawn, at the will of God[1]—for ethical reasons, no doubt—but not as the result of automatic laws. They never obscured the glory of the divine freedom.

There is a very remarkable illustration of this conception of

[1] The activity of God, or of the Spirit of God, in the physical universe and indeed in man, so far as man belongs to the realm of Nature, may be accurately described as an 'immanence' voluntarily determined by Law. God has voluntarily limited His freedom in the manifestations of Himself in Nature. But in the Old Testament conception of 'the Spirit,' there is a preparation for the fuller disclosure of the great conception of the New

the Spirit of God in the account of the divine determination to shorten the length of human life. The sins of men had become flagrant, and God is represented as saying, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man'—or rather *rule* in man—'for ever, for that he also is flesh; yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years' (Gen. vi. 3, reading in margin). The mysterious power of physical life, presiding in man and preserving his 'flesh' from death and corruption, is conceived as one form of the presence and activity of the Divine Spirit; and the presence, the activity, of the Spirit is not to continue in individual men for centuries; it is to be prematurely withdrawn, as the penalty of the great wickedness of the race, and human life is to be limited to a hundred and twenty years.

As the life of man—even his physical life—is thought of as a form of activity of the Divine Spirit, exceptional physical endowments are also attributed to the Spirit. 'The Spirit of the Lord came mightily' upon Samson, that strange wild hero of Jewish story, and he rent the 'young lion' that 'roared against him' 'as he would have rent a kid' (Judges xiv. 6). 'The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and smote thirty men of them, and took their spoil' (Judges xiv. 19). When the Philistines had bound him with ropes 'the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands dropped from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and smote a thousand men therewith' (Judges xv. 14, 15).

Artistic skill was also considered to be a power conferred by the Spirit of God. In Exodus God is represented as saying to Moses, 'I have called by name Bezaleel . . . and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship' (Exod. xxxi. 1-5).

Testament, that in the action of the personal Spirit there is a manifestation of the divine freedom, whether in the form of the miracles which were wrought by our Lord Himself in the power of the Spirit, or in supernatural 'gifts,' or in the ethical and spiritual changes which are the result of the work of the Spirit in the higher life of man.

The power of leadership which was a mystery then, and is a mystery still—the power which gives a man ascendency over others,—enables him to sway and to rule them, and to draw them into an orderly system of which he is the centre, as the mass of the sun sways and rules the planets, and restrains them from wandering into the far wastes of space—a power which is sometimes exerted by a man who has no unusual wealth of knowledge, no eloquence, no keenness or brilliance of intellect, whose mind is sluggish and his speech halting and obscure—this power of leadership was also ascribed to the Spirit of God. In the troubled times of Israel the Spirit of God came upon Othniel and upon Gideon and upon Jephthah, and they roused the patriotism of their countrymen, led them to battle, broke for a time the power of their oppressors, and the land had rest under their rule (Judges iii. 10; vi. 34; xi. 29). 'The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Saul' when he heard of the cruel and insolent terms of peace which Nahash the Ammonite had offered to the men of Jabesh-Gilead: he gathered together many thousands of the people, and he inflicted on the Ammonites terrible chastisement (1 Sam. xi. 6). When Samuel had anointed David 'the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward' (1 Sam. xvi. 13).

But the great manifestation of 'the Spirit' in Old Testament times was in the wonderful succession of prophets who, through century after century, rebuked, counselled, and consoled Israel. It was in the power of the Spirit that 'the word of the Lord' came to them, and that they saw their 'vision.' Zechariah (vii. 12) speaks of 'the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets'; and Micah declares (iv. 8), 'I truly am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.' In his great prayer, Nehemiah says, while confessing the sins of his people, 'Yet many years didst Thou bear with them, and testifiedst against them by Thy Spirit through Thy prophets (Neh. ix. 30). And, apart from any explicit claim, we can recognise the energy of the same Spirit in the Hebrew Psalms, which are as wonderful as the Hebrew prophecies.

To us who read the Old Testament Scriptures in the light of the New, it is surprising how rarely the Spirit of God is

regarded by Psalmists and Prophets as a power for the sanctification of human life. The prayer in Psalms li. 11, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me,' must surely be regarded as implying that the Holy Spirit was the only source of human holiness; but this witness to what we regard as the highest work of the Spirit of God stands almost, if not quite alone, in the Old Testament Scriptures, if we leave out of consideration the prophetic passages referring to the great future redemption which was the hope of Israel. Even in some of these prophetic passages we find no explicit recognition of the work of the Spirit of God in sanctifying men, where we should most confidently have expected to find it. In the noble prophecy of Jeremiah for example (xxxi. 33-40), in which God is represented as saying, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it . . . and they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,'—even here there is no explicit declaration that this will be the work of the Spirit of God. In the passage in Joel (ii. 28), in which God declares that the time is coming when He will pour out His Spirit 'on all flesh,' there is nothing about the change which the Spirit is to achieve in the spiritual life of men; but 'your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions.' Ezekiel sees more clearly the glory of the great future: 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will *put My Spirit* within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them' (xxxvi. 26, 27).

In no passage in the Old Testament is there any clear evidence that either Psalmist or Prophet knew that the Spirit of God is a Divine Person; to all of them He was a Divine Power. Now and then they imaginatively personify the Power of God as they personify the Word of God. Isaiah says (xlviii. 17): 'And now the Lord God hath sent me, and His Spirit.' And again (lxiii. 10): 'They rebelled, and *grieved* His Holy Spirit.' In the second passage the thought of the prophet actually touches the great truth, for a 'Power' cannot be

grieved; but we can hardly suppose that he actually grasped it; if he had, we should have found it elsewhere in his own writings and the writings of his successors.

It deserves, I think, some consideration that the development of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Old Testament corresponds closely with the traditional dates attributed to the books. It is very far from my intention to suggest any doubt as to the composite character of the books traditionally attributed to individual authors, or as to the additions and modifications which the books received from editors and revisers. But an argument for the originality and authenticity of the *materials* is suggested by the different functions attributed to the Spirit in different ages. The relation of the Spirit of God to the material universe implied in Gen. i. 2 is indeed no proof of the antiquity of the document, for it is a relation which was recognised in the latest times of Jewish history; nor, perhaps, can any importance in this connection be attributed to Gen. vi. 3 if the words bear the interpretation given earlier in this note. My point is, that as the history goes on, there is a gradual ascent of dignity in the work attributed to the Spirit of God; Bezaleel's artistic skill; the power of leadership given to the elders in the wilderness, and to judges and kings; the passing of the kind of prophetic 'possession' which came upon Saul into the vision of God and the clear knowledge of the laws of His moral and spiritual government granted to the great prophets; the discovery by Ezekiel that the Spirit was to make men righteous and holy;—these are the successive movements by which the thought of Israel gradually advanced towards the great revelation of the highest work of the Spirit in New Testament times. The recognition of the 'Holy Spirit' in Psalm li. as the source of sanctification is to me the most decisive proof of the late date of that Psalm.

NOTE Q—PAGE 128.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EARLY PARTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Holy Spirit as a Divine Person was unknown when the angel appeared to the mother of our Lord; and therefore

the words, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' must be interpreted as being equivalent to the words which follow: 'and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee' (Luke i. 35.). Whether the 'power' was the power of the Personal Spirit, is to be determined on general theological grounds; we cannot affirm it on the authority of the message of the angel. And the great declaration of John the Baptist, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire' (Matt. iii. 11), must also be interpreted as meaning, so far as the Baptist knew, that the coming of the Christ would be accompanied with the communication to men of new and larger measures of spiritual power; the very form of his preaching, which affirmed that the Christ would *baptize* with, or in, the Holy Ghost, shows that he was thinking of an Influence or a Power, not of a Person. Nor can we adduce our Lord's words to Nicodemus: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (John iii. 5, 6.)—as a *direct* proof that regeneration is the work of the Personal Spirit. Nicodemus knew nothing of the Personal Spirit; but he did know of the contrast between 'spirit' and 'flesh'—the higher life and the lower—the life by which man is related to the visible and the earthly, and the life by which man is related to the invisible and the divine. Christ spoke of two contrasted realms of life, and spoke of both in abstract terms; the one is 'flesh,' the other is 'spirit'; if a man is to enter the kingdom of God he must have the life of the divine realm. That this life comes from the Personal Spirit appears from other parts of the New Testament, and from the whole Christian conception of the Spirit, but it cannot be proved by the words of our Lord to Nicodemus. A very careful revision of the traditional exegesis of passages in the New Testament, where the word 'spirit' occurs, seems to be necessary.

NOTE R—PAGE 130.

THE WORD 'COMFORTER'—(JOHN XIV. 16).

The word 'Comforter' was used in this place in Wiclif's version (A.D. 1380), and has retained its place in all the great

English versions, with one exception, that have been made since :—it stands in Tyndale's, Cranmer's, the Genevan, the Authorised, and the Revised ; in the Rheims version (A.D. 1582) it is replaced by 'Paraclete.' When the word was first introduced into our version, 'to comfort' meant 'to strengthen,' retaining its Latin sense. *E.g.* our R.V. in Isaiah xli. 7, where the prophet is mocking at the workmen who are employed in setting up an idol, reads: 'he *fastened* it with nails, that it should not be moved;' Wiclif's version reads: 'he *coumfortide* him with nailes, that it should not be moued.' Hooker (*Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. I.) says that 'God's own testimony added unto the natural assent of reason, concerning the certainty of them, doth not a little *comfort* and confirm the same.' Bacon uses the noun in a corresponding sense, and says that Poynings attributed his slight success, in his endeavour to suppress an outbreak of Irish disorder, to 'the *comfort*' secretly given to the rebels by the Earl of Kildare (quoted in Todd's *Johnson*). But, as Dr. Lightfoot says, 'Advocate' is 'the sense which the context suggests, wherever the word is used in the Gospel. In other words, the idea of pleading, arguing, convincing, instructing, convicting, is prominent in every instance.' 'The history of interpretation' which he gives, shows that the rendering 'comforter' 'was based on a grammatical error.'—*On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, pp. 52, 53 (2nd edit.). Macmillan : London and New York.

NOTE S—PAGE 150.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY—THE CHRISTIAN ATTEMPT TO ASSERT THE UNITY OF GOD.

That the Lord Jesus Christ was in some unique and real sense divine, was implied from the beginning in the whole life of those who received the Gospel. It was implied not only in the worship which they offered to Him, but in their belief that He was present in their Church assemblies, that he listened to and answered their prayers, that He was the Lord and the Redeemer of men. On the other hand, there was a faith equally deep and real in the unity of God. For Jewish Christians to

have surrendered their testimony to Monotheism, would have been to abandon the truth to which their race had been elected to bear witness. The Gentile Christians, on the other hand, through receiving the Christian Gospel, had come to a vivid knowledge of the One Supreme God, and to have compromised Monotheism would have been to do violence to their new religious life, and to destroy the force of their assault on the idolatries of heathenism. How to reconcile the two truths —the Divinity of our Lord and the Unity of God—was the ultimate question at issue beneath the great controversies of the early Church: it was far from being finally determined by the decrees of the Council of Nicæa.

In the second century the Church had to maintain the two truths against Gnosticism; in the fourth century against Arianism. Gnosticism acknowledged the unity of the transcendent God, and affirmed that Christ and the Holy Spirit were divine emanations—or emanations from emanations—and were not in any true sense one with the Eternal. Against this position it was necessary to maintain the true divinity of our Lord without sacrificing the divine unity and making Christ a second God. Arianism maintained the divine unity, and represented Christ as the first and most glorious of creatures. Against this position, too, it was necessary to maintain the true divinity of our Lord without sacrificing the divine unity and making Christ a second God. What was called Monarchianism, was an attempt to solve this difficulty. There was indeed an inconsiderable sect—sometimes called Ebionite Christians—who, while acknowledging the divine mission of our Lord Jesus, denied His divinity; but these solved the question by throwing out one of its terms. They, too, were Monarchians; but their Monarchianism was wholly different in its spirit and contents from the Monarchianism which was taught by some famous theologians in the second, third, and fourth centuries. With considerable variations in the details of their systems, the Monarchians were substantially agreed in maintaining that God is rigidly and absolutely One, and that, in the eternal life of the Godhead, there are no such distinctions as could in any sense of the term be described as 'personal'; but that Father, Son, and Spirit, were successive—or even simultaneous—manifestations of the one Divine Personality.

This theory has come to be known as Sabellianism, though Sabellius was not the first theologian who taught it, and though his writings have almost wholly perished, and hardly anything is known of his personal history. He lived in the early part of the third century, and seems to have been connected with the Roman Church; but he exerted the largest influence in the East.

According to some who held the Monarchian theory, the One Eternal God unfolds Himself in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; according to others the Father is the Eternal Fount of Divinity and unfolds Himself in Son and Holy Spirit. Sabellius appears to have held the second position. As those who held any form of this theory, identified the personality of the Lord Jesus with the personality of the Father, they were called in the West, Patripassians, that is, they were charged with teaching that in the sufferings of our Lord the Father suffered, for they taught that the Son was the Father Himself.

To ourselves the doctrinal interest of the Monarchianism—or Unitarianism—of the early centuries, lies in the fact that it was an attempt to assert the true deity of our Lord, against doctrinal theories which represented Him as less than divine.

Sabellianism has had its adherents in more recent times. It is often described as maintaining an 'economic Trinity'—that is, a Trinity in the manifestations of God to our race, as distinguished from a real and eternal Trinity in the life of the Godhead. There are several philosophical theories of the divine nature which are in substance Sabellian.

NOTE T—Page 170.

THE ACCOUNTS IN GENESIS OF THE CREATION OF MAN.

Every age, every country, has its own way of expressing its emotion and its faith. If *we* want to speak of the infinite mercy of God, and to condemn the unbrotherly spirit of those who do not rejoice over the rescue of men from great sin, we do it most easily in a sermon. Christ did it in a Parable—the Parable which we call the Parable of the Prodigal Son. We know a Parable when we see it; we do not mistake it for a history; we try to find out its meaning.

If *we* want to speak about the moral difficulties of the world, the troubles which come upon good men, apparently without

cause, it is most natural, perhaps, for us to discuss the subject in a philosophical essay. Two or three thousand years ago, the writer of the book of Job put his thoughts about the mystery into a dramatic Poem; and even now, a Poem may be a more effective vehicle for the discussion than an Essay. We know a Poem when we see it; we do not suppose that all those things happened to Job which the book of Job records, or that his friends actually made the long and elaborate speeches which are attributed to them. We try to find out what the Poem means.

And if *we* want to give an account of what we believe about the nature and origin of man, about his moral position, about his relations to God, we construct a series of theological or philosophical propositions, we draw up a creed, we write a treatise on theology or philosophy. But in early days men expressed their faith in the form of a story. And when the story passed from mouth to mouth, was modified by the popular imagination and feeling, became part of the common stock of the thought of a tribe, a nation, a race, entered into their life, it was called a Myth.

A Myth might be described as a popular tradition containing in an historical form an imaginative statement of the common belief concerning the origin of the world and of man—concerning the superhuman powers which were supposed to control the great phenomena of the earth, the sea, the mountains, the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars. There were also mythical accounts of great catastrophes which had happened to cities and to nations, and of the origin of the useful arts such as agriculture, writing, and the working of the precious metals. As we know a Poem or a Parable when we see it, we ought to know a Myth when we see it.

A Myth is as legitimate an expression of human belief as a Parable or a Poem. It may be just as true as a Parable or a Poem. But obviously Parable, Poem, Myth must each be interpreted according to its own laws.

It would not be perfectly accurate to describe the stories in the early part of the book of Genesis as myths. For an ordinary myth is the growth of the popular imagination uncontrolled by divine revelation. But these stories have a mythical form. They belong to the same class of literature. They have to be interpreted in the same way. We have to ask—

What were the truths which they embodied? How would they be understood by the people who found in them the expression of their religious faith?

They have a mythical form. They may have been constructed from popular myths still more ancient than themselves. But they contain their own evidence that there is a divine element in them. They must, I think, have originated in discoveries which came to inspired saints concerning the relations of man and the world to God. When corruption had gathered about them, they were probably reconstructed by men who had received still clearer and still fuller revelations from Heaven. Belonging—at least in their original substance—to very early times, they harmonise in the most wonderful way with the supreme revelation of God in Christ. If I wanted to give them a name I should call them inspired myths.

NOTE U—PAGE 174.

THE IMAGE OF GOD.

Mr. Laidlaw (in pp. 100, 101 of *The Bible Doctrine of Man*: T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1875), discussing Genesis i. 26, 27, says: 'We note especially two things brought out by its textual connection. Instead of the expression, "after his kind," used of all the other creatures, it substitutes, as the archetype of man's formation, the image and similitude of God. Again, instead of the origination of an order of beings, each of which is a nameless specimen or example of its kind, what we find here is the origination of a person who holds a momentous place in the history of the world. As to the two terms, "image" and "likeness," it has only to be remarked that while both occur in verse 26, "image" (*Tselem*) alone is thrice repeated in verse 27, and "likeness" (*Demuth*) alone is found in Genesis v. 1. This discourages the attempt of some ancient and modern writers to base important theological distinctions on the use of these words here. Especially futile is it to identify *Tselem* with the permanent, and *Demuth* with the perishable element in the divine image. The double expression belongs to the strength and emphasis with which the fact of man's creation in Godlikeness is set forth in this remarkable text. Likeness added to image tells that the divine image

which man bears is one corresponding to the original pattern.[1] For the rest, the light which the passage in its connection throws on the contents of the divine image is chiefly relational. The central and supreme place assigned to man among the other creatures, is explanatory of his image on the one side, as the solemn and majestic record of his creation is on the other. By the latter is suggested man's nearness and kinship to his Maker; by the former, his superiority and supremacy over the things made.'

NOTE V—PAGE 178.

PASSAGES IN GENESIS REFERRING TO THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN.

It is perhaps deserving of notice that the three passages in the book of Genesis, in which man is described as having been created in the image of God, are found in those sections of the book which are assigned to the 'Priests' Code'—the latest of the great sources of the Hexateuch.

NOTE W—PAGE 215.

ADAM'S SIN AND THE HUMAN RACE.

The doctrine of Paul (Rom. v. 12-21) on the relation between the sin of Adam and the sin and death of his descendants was probably a doctrine of the Jewish schools, and Paul found in it a magnificent illustration of the transcendent power and glory of the righteousness of Christ. The doctrine appears, in rather a crude form, in *The Apocalypse of Baruch* and in *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, two Jewish books which were probably written towards the close of the first century. (See Schürer, *The Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, Div. ii. vol. iii. pp. 89, 90.) These books may be assumed to represent the rabbinical theology of their time: and, if they do, Paul may have learnt the substance of his doctrine of Original Sin from the rabbis at whose feet he sat before he became a Christian. In the Christian Gospel he found no reason for rejecting it. The doctrine was, in *substance*, an affirmation of the solidarity of the human race in sin and in mortality; that solidarity is

[1] Oehler's *Theology of the Old Testament*, i. 211. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1874.

assumed by the Christian Redemption. In *form*, the doctrine was derived from one of the most profound and impressive passages in the Old Testament—the story of the creation and fall of man.

It is, however, in every way deserving of notice that, although the Christian redemption assumes that the race has fallen, this particular conception of the manner of the fall is neither expressed nor implied in any passage of the New Testament except Rom. v. 12-21 and 1 Cor. xv. 22. The truths which are of the substance of the Christian Gospel hold together: they are organically one. It was said of a great anatomist that he could reconstruct an extinct animal from a single bone; and it might almost be said that the whole of the Christian Gospel might be reconstructed from any one of its characteristic doctrines. But the theory of the relation between Adam and his posterity, which is incidentally stated in Romans v. 12-21 and 1 Cor. xv. 22, has no such organic relation to the general body of Christian truth. If these two passages had not been written, or if they had been lost, there is nothing in the rest of the New Testament to suggest this account of the effects of the sin of 'one man.' The New Testament assumes that all men are sinners, and that all men are mortal; as to how they became sinners or how they became mortal there is nothing said, explicitly or implicitly, except in these two passages. And even in these passages it is not Paul's direct purpose to explain the cause of either human sin or human mortality; his direct object is to declare that in Christ men are made righteous and are to rise from the dead. His reference to the effects of Adam's sin is merely for the purpose of illustration.

NOTE X—PAGE 238.

MR. J. S. MILL ON MANSEL'S BAMPTON LECTURE.

'Neither is this to set up my own limited intellect as a criterion of divine or of any other wisdom. If a person is wiser and better than myself, not in some unknown and unknowable meaning of the terms, but in their known human acceptation, I am ready to believe that what this person thinks may be true, and that what he does may be right, when, but for

the opinion I have of him, I should think otherwise. But this is because I believe that he and I have at bottom the same standard of truth and rule of right, and that he probably understands better than I the facts of the particular case. If I thought it not improbable that his notion of right might be my notion of wrong, I should not defer to his judgment. In like manner, one who sincerely believes in an absolutely good ruler of the world, is not warranted in disbelieving any act ascribed to him, merely because the very small part of its circumstances which we can possibly know does not sufficiently justify it. But if what I am told respecting him is of a kind which no facts that can be supposed added to my knowledge could make me perceive to be right; if his alleged ways of dealing with the world are such as no imaginable hypothesis respecting things known to him and unknown to me, could make consistent with the goodness and wisdom, which I mean when I use the terms, but are in direct contradiction to their signification; then if the law of contradiction is a law of human thought, I cannot both believe these things, and believe that God is a good and wise being. If I call any being wise or good, not meaning the only qualities which the words import, I am speaking insincerely; I am flattering him by epithets which I fancy that he likes to hear, in the hope of winning him over to my own objects.'—J. S. Mill. *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, pp. 103-4. London: Longmans and Co., 1865.

NOTE Y—PAGE 268.

THE PHYSICAL CAUSE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

Dr. William Stroud, in his *Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1847), has given scientific reasons for the theory that our Lord's Death was occasioned by 'Agony of mind, producing rupture of the heart.' In Dr. Hanna's *Last Day of our Lord's Passion* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas: Seventh Edition, 1865), there are letters concurring in this opinion from Dr. James Begbie, Fellow and late President of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; Dr. J. Y. Simpson, Professor of Medicine and Midwifery, Edinburgh University; and Dr. John Struthers, Lecturer on Anatomy, Surgeons' Hall.

NOTE Z—PAGE 270.

CHRIST THE WAY TO THE FATHER.

The previous pages are not intended to imply that Christ is the 'way' to the Father for no other reason than that He died for us. He is the 'way' to the Father because of the Eternal relations between the Son of God and the human race; and He would have been the way to God for the human race had the human race never sinned. But that He has passed through His experience on the cross seems to enable sinful men to approach God through Him with penitence and humiliation on account of their sin. Christian men are conscious, when they confess sin, of a special act of union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings for sin.

NOTE AA—PAGE 272.

BAPTISM AND DYING WITH CHRIST.

Baptism is declared by Paul to be the visible witness that we died with Christ. 'We were buried with Him in Baptism' (Rom. vi. 4). But it is not the living who are buried but the dead. Nor is it in Baptism that we die; we died with Christ, and therefore in Baptism we are buried with Him. See Godet, *Commentary on Romans* in loc.

NOTE BB—PAGE 273.

ON CHRIST DYING TO SIN.

'*The death that He died, He died unto sin once*' (Rom. vi. 10). Our Lord had been living in a world into which sin had brought confusion, suffering, and misery. Though free from sin Himself, He had become a member of a race which had fallen short of the divine glory and He had shared the results of the tragic failure. On the cross these results came upon Him in their extreme severity, and their most appalling form. But on the cross,' He died unto sin once'—'once for all' (Rom. vi.

10, R.V. margin). He ceased to have a place in a Moral order which had been disturbed by sin. The awful burden fell away from Him. He passed out of the great darkness; and when He rose He entered into glory. Now He 'liveth,' and liveth for ever 'unto God.' In the Death and Resurrection of Christ we, too, according to Paul, pass out of an old order into a new; we are delivered out of 'this present evil world' and 'out of the power of darkness,' and are 'translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love' (Gal. i. 4).

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